$15.50

Greater Chillum Community Study

December 2015

Neighborhoods

Chillum

Carole Highlands

Hampshire Knolls

Lewisdale

Avonridge

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Prince George's County Planning Department
www.pgplanning.org

Abstract

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Author: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

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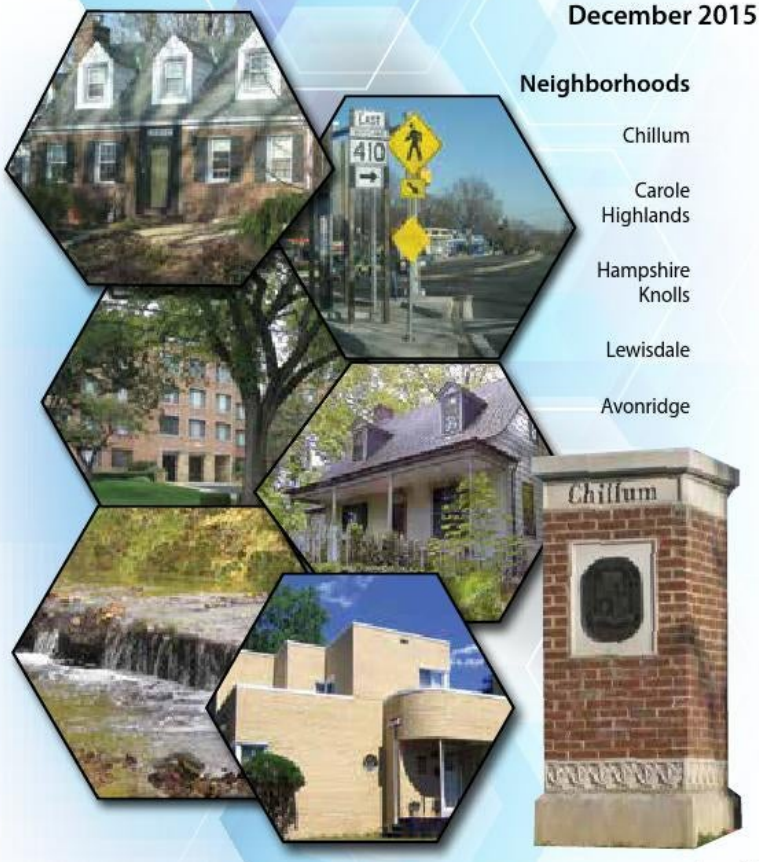
Abstract: This study was initiated to investigate the needs of the Greater Chillum Community and prepare guidance to assist Prince George's County and The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission with implementation approaches. The study area is located in an unincorporated region of Prince George's County, east of the City of Takoma Park (Montgomery County), south of Langley Park, west of the City of Hyattsville, and north of the District of Columbia. The project concentrates on developing a comprehensive list of needs and improvement strategies with an emphasis on defining and facilitating neighborhood conservation, pedestrian safety and access, and commercial revitalization strategies and programs.

Greater Chillum Community Study

December 2015



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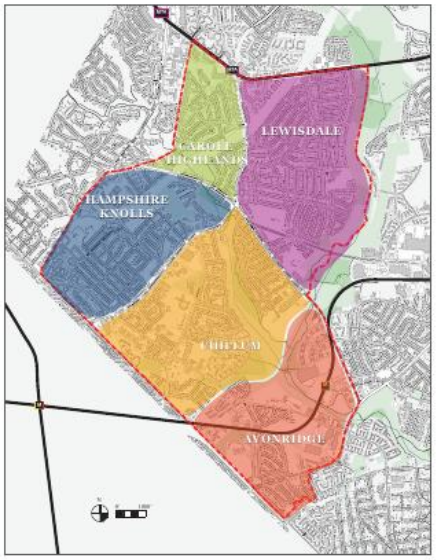
Executive Summary

Background

The Prince George's County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission initiated the *Greater Chillum Community Study* in 2013 to determine community needs and corresponding recommendations that maximize the community's assets as it relates to a sense of place, neighborhood conservation, pedestrian connectivity, affordable housing, and the revitalization of aging commercial properties. This study is intended to provide a road map for future public and private investments in the community as well as for Prince George's County policy initiatives. Unlike a sector plan, this study does not include a sectional map amendment and a change in the zoning.



Study Area

The *Greater Chillum Community Study* covers roughly 2.5 square miles of unincorporated Prince George's County, Maryland. The area (which will be called the study area for the purposes of this study) includes five neighborhoods: Chillum, Carole Highlands, Hampshire Knolls, Lewisdale, and Avonridge. The City of Takoma Park and Montgomery County, Maryland, border the study area to the north; to the west sits the City of Hyattsville, Maryland, and to the south is Washington, D.C. The West Hyattsville Metro Station is on the eastern edge of the study area, while the Fort Totten Metro Station sits just south of the boundary. The future Riggs Road Purple Line Station will be at the northern boundary of the study area on University Boulevard. The study area is located in the Established Community Policy Area as defined in the 2014 *Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan*.

This study is intended to provide a road map for future public and private investments in the community as well as for Prince George's County policy initiatives.

Goal

The *Greater Chillum Community Study* makes recommendations for implementable changes within the community to improve walkability and pedestrian safety, preserve and celebrate neighborhood character and sense of place, address code violations, improve owner-occupied housing and rental residential opportunities for a variety of incomes, create economic opportunities, and strengthen community identity. The specific study area

recommendations are broken down into these topic areas: housing, economic development, connectivity and transportation, and redevelopment and revitalization.

Table 1. Summary of Challenges and Opportunities

Opportunities	Constraints
• The location is well connected, sitting inside the Beltway near two Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Metro stations, three future Maryland Transit Administration Purple Line Stations, and numerous bus lines. This accessible location has the potential for the redevelopment of low-density commercial properties with mixed-use, transit-oriented development (TOD). • Already established single-family neighborhoods help to diversify housing options. • Diverse community that includes African-Americans, Central Americans, West Africans, Vietnamese, Koreans, and Indians. • Existing community amenities that include housing choices, access to transit, abundant park land, regional trails, and proximity to major employment. • Strong market position because of proximity to transit and employment centers and existing ethnic businesses.	• Poor connectivity exists between neighborhoods and in transit and retail centers. • Strong market position, specifically unmet retail demand, is overshadowed by market perceptions. • Conversion of owner-occupied, single-family housing to multifamily rental units creates difficulties for code enforcement officials. • Current road design discourages multimodal access to transit choices. • Zoning and market conditions discourage the redevelopment of aging, low-density commercial developments into walkable mixed-use development. • Market perceptions overshadow market position, perceived crime issues, comparative lower spending power of study area residents, atypical demand patterns of immigrant populations, and lack of a "destination" to attract consumers.

Existing Conditions

Strategically located, the Greater Chillum Community study area is transitioning from a suburban community centered around the automobile to an urban, inner-Beltway community. Suburban characteristics once defined the greater Chillum area as having lower densities, more homogeneous incomes and demographics, and daily needs located outside of walking distance of most residents. Today, urban characteristics are beginning to become the norm such as larger families with lower incomes that require more affordable, higher-density housing, more diversity in incomes and race, and less reliance on automobiles as a primary means to access daily needed goods and services.

Given these changing demographics and the need for a more walkable environment, pressure exists to provide adequate housing for the influx

of immigrants to the area, maintain affordable housing choices, improve property maintenance practices, and strengthen community identity. Like many nearby communities, the late 1960s shifted the demographics of the community from predominantly white to include a large proportion of African-Americans. Recently, another dramatic demographic shift has occurred as a large immigrant population has moved to the study area. In particular, Hispanic immigrants from Central America have changed the cultural makeup in the multifamily and single-family housing neighborhoods. This shift has created dramatic changes in household size, retail demand, transportation usage, educational levels, and employment. Overall, household size in the study area has increased in many cases in an effort to cut down on housing costs. It has also led to a shift from owner-occupied to renter-occupied single-family homes. The market for housing faces competition from nearby markets. Recent sales prices are just above current assessed value, and foreclosures are comparatively low, but short sales have recently increased. This has affected the standard of property maintenance and caused cultural conflict between the new and existing residents of the study area. The most significant concerns that stakeholders raised were the perceived lack of code enforcement and the demographic shifts in Prince George's County caused by the move of lower-income, Washington, D.C. residents and immigrants into the neighborhoods.

The market for housing faces competition from nearby markets.

Many of the newer residents of the area are more dependent on public transportation such as the bus and heavy rail. The increased use of public transportation highlights the deficiencies in the existing infrastructure. Current roadway designs support fast vehicular movements but do not provide sufficient networks for pedestrians and cyclists. Major and minor connector streets are often lacking sidewalks, and most bus stops are without shelters.

The market analysis suggests that with the growing immigrant population, medium household incomes will remain below the Prince George's County average through 2018, indicating a need for affordable housing, employment, and retail choices within walking distance of transit. Employment opportunities in the study area are limited to retail, service, and few healthcare positions. These jobs are not large economic growth generators. Dampening the opportunity for quality employment growth is the area's low level of education. Additionally, most residents must travel outside the study area to work with an average commute time of over 30 minutes.

The recent influx of immigrants has also increased demand for ethnic businesses, but lower incomes overall have caused a shift in the quality of retail and restaurant offerings. Long-term residents express an interest in higher quality restaurants and retail options.

Given the historical development pattern previously explained in detail, the study area has a history of separated land uses. The majority of commercial development is predominantly single-story strip retail on major vehicular corridors and at major intersections. The retail is almost fully leased and offers grocery stores, ethnic retailers, low-cost restaurants, and neighborhood-serving retail. A small amount of office exists on New Hampshire Avenue, and light industrial uses are on Chillum Road. The area is largely built out, so future development will likely be small infill projects or the redevelopment of existing properties. Although the commercial properties are fully leased, they face regional competition from nearby regional nodes like Prince George's Plaza.

The goal of this study is to give the community and Prince George's County recommendations that harness assets and address deficiencies in order to improve the lives of people who live in the Greater Chillum Community. From an examination of the existing conditions, implementable strategies were identified for the study area and, more broadly, Prince George's County.

A typical cresting residential street in Hampshire Knolls. Belford Towers can be seen in the distance.

Key Recommendations

The following are the key recommendations from the study:

Neighborhoods and Sense of Place

1. Identify the community by creating gateway signage at key entry points into the study area.

2. Celebrate each community within the five neighborhoods with identification signage and investment in neighborhood parks.

3. Encourage the conversion of commercial areas to mixed-use TODs.

4. Improve pedestrian connections within each neighborhood and between neighborhoods by completing sidewalk connections throughout the study area.

Housing

1. Improve existing single-family housing stock. Neighborhood Conservation Districts or Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas should be considered in some neighborhoods. Publicly funded programs that assist homeowners and landlords with maintenance will help offset the inability to get conventional loans for costs.

2. Reform code enforcement to stabilize neighborhoods through a case management approach that seeks to find solutions for the root causes of code violations.

3. Increase quality affordable housing options, particularly using TOD as a catalyst for increasing availability of mixed-use housing.

4. Research and study redevelopment and densification options that respect the existing, single-family communities and increase the supply of quality housing.

5. Develop neighborhood specific policies and programs for housing initiatives that address issues block by block and provide housing counseling for homeowners.

6. Implement Prince George's County's housing and economic development initiatives throughout the study area.

7. Develop relationships with national organizations experienced in transitioning neighborhoods.

Economic Development

1. Create a marketing identity for the greater Chillum study area that celebrates its competitive advantage as an international marketplace with ethnic-based businesses.

2. Pursue development efforts for local businesses to help small business owners offer unique and in-demand products.

3. Work with local property owners to convert vacant space into a culinary and hospitality incubator.

4. Establish a location for an urban farm and garden with space for weekend farmers' markets.

The commercial strip center at East West Highway with the Newbury Square Apartments in the background.

Commercial strip center on Sargent Road

5. Promote development of additional affordable rental housing units by incorporating these units into new mixed-use redevelopment efforts.

6. Work with the Prince George's County Redevelopment Authority and existing property owners to identify potentially catalytic projects based on their potential impacts on the surrounding community.

Pedestrians crossing the complicated intersection at Riggs Road and East West Highway.

Apartments in Alexandria, Virginia, look like townhouses, but provide smaller, affordable units in the community.

Transportation and Connectivity

1. Improve pedestrian connectivity by improving infrastructure such as sidewalks and trail connections between neighborhoods across parks.

2. Provide public safety improvements to trails and walkways through the park system to discourage crime and increase usage.

3. Increase transit opportunities by reducing bus headways, exploring circulator service to West Hyattsville, and improving bicycle facilities.

4. Further evaluate crash data to address safety concerns.

5. Implement infrastructure changes planned in the study area.
    - Ager Road complete streets improvement.
    - Purple Line project.
    - Approved Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan.
    - New Hampshire Avenue Corridor Concept Plan.
    - Chillum Road/Queens Chapel Road improvements.

Revitalization and Redevelopment

1. Explore rezoning in accordance with the zoning code update to encourage mixed use development in strategic areas and the preservation of existing neighborhoods.

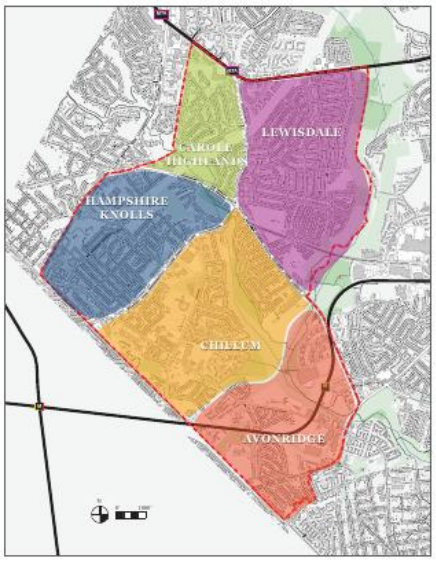
2. Identify priority redevelopment locations and minor redevelopment nodes that offer the best opportunity to be a catalyst for overall community improvement.

3. Facilitate property improvements for commercial properties and neighborhoods.

4. Increase maintenance, programming, and activities in public open space to celebrate this distinctive element of the study area.

Table 2. Implementation Priorities			
	Near-Term	**Mid-Term**	**Long-Term**
Housing	• Reform code enforcement to stabilize neighborhoods • Research and study redevelopment and density options • Develop neighborhood specific policies and programs for housing initiatives • Implement Prince George's County's housing and economic development initiatives throughout the study area • Develop relationships with national organizations experienced in transitioning neighborhoods	• Improve existing single-family housing stock • Increase quality, affordable housing options, particularly TOD • Research and study redevelopment and density options • Implement Prince George's County's housing and economic development initiatives throughout the study area	• Improve existing single-family housing stock • Increase quality, affordable housing options, particularly TOD
Economic Development	• Create a marketing identity for the Greater Chillum Community • Work with local property owners to convert vacant space into a weekend farmers' market • Establish a location for an urban farm and garden with work space for a weekend farmers' market	• Pursue development efforts for local businesses • Promote development of additional, affordable, rental housing units	• Work with Prince George's County Redevelopment Authority and selected property owners to identify potential catalytic projects
Connectivity and Transportation	• Improve pedestrian connectivity • Improve public safety • Further evaluate crash data to understand additional safety concerns • Implement planned infrastructure changes	• Improve pedestrian connectivity • Implement infrastructure changes planned • Reduce space between lighted intersections for pedestrians on major roads by signalized pedestrian crossings to improve access to bus stops	• Increase transit opportunities • Implement planned infrastructure changes
Redevelopment and Revitalization	• Support the countywide zoning rewrite • Facilitate property improvements • Increase investments, programming, and activities in public open spaces	• Explore rezoning • Facilitate property improvements • Increase investments, programming, and activities in public open spaces	• Identify priority redevelopment locations • Increase investments, programming, and activities in public open spaces
Neighborhoods and Sense of Place	• Create identity signage for the Greater Chillum Community at major gateways • Install signage for communities within the study area • Improve and create safe pedestrian connections through the open spaces and easements that currently divide neighborhoods • Educate residents on bulk trash pick-up procedures	• Create a neighborhood park at Chillum Manor open space • Create a trail between orphan sections of Knollbrook Drive along creek	• Encourage the conversion of commercial areas to mixed-use, TOD

Introduction



Study Area Location

The *Greater Chillum Community Study* covers roughly 2.5 square miles of unincorporated Prince George's County, Maryland. The area includes five neighborhoods: Chillum, Carole Highlands, Hampshire Knolls, Lewisdale, and Avonridge. The City of Takoma Park and Montgomery County, Maryland, border the study area to the north; to the west sits the City of Hyattsville, Maryland, and to the south is Washington, D.C. The Chillum area was developed as some of the first metropolitan area suburbs not served by a street car in the 1940s and 1950s. The neighborhoods are a mixture of low- to medium-density single-family detached residential, low- to medium-density garden-style residential, and a few higher-density residential towers. The homes are served by low-density commercial strip centers along the major vehicular corridors. A significant portion of the study area is dedicated to religious uses and social services, including housing for seniors, women, and children.

The Chillum area was developed as some of the first metropolitan area suburbs not served by a street car in the 1940s and 1950s.

This inner-ring suburb is well served by existing transit. There are 3 regional and 10 local bus routes servicing the neighborhoods, and 2 Metrorail stations border the study area. West Hyattsville sits near the Green Line on the east and Fort Totten sits near the Green, Yellow, and Red Lines to the southwest. In the future, three Maryland Transit Administration Purple Line Light Rail stations will be built on the study area's northern border, and a planned transit way from Montgomery County into Prince George's County will bisect the study area along East West Highway.

History

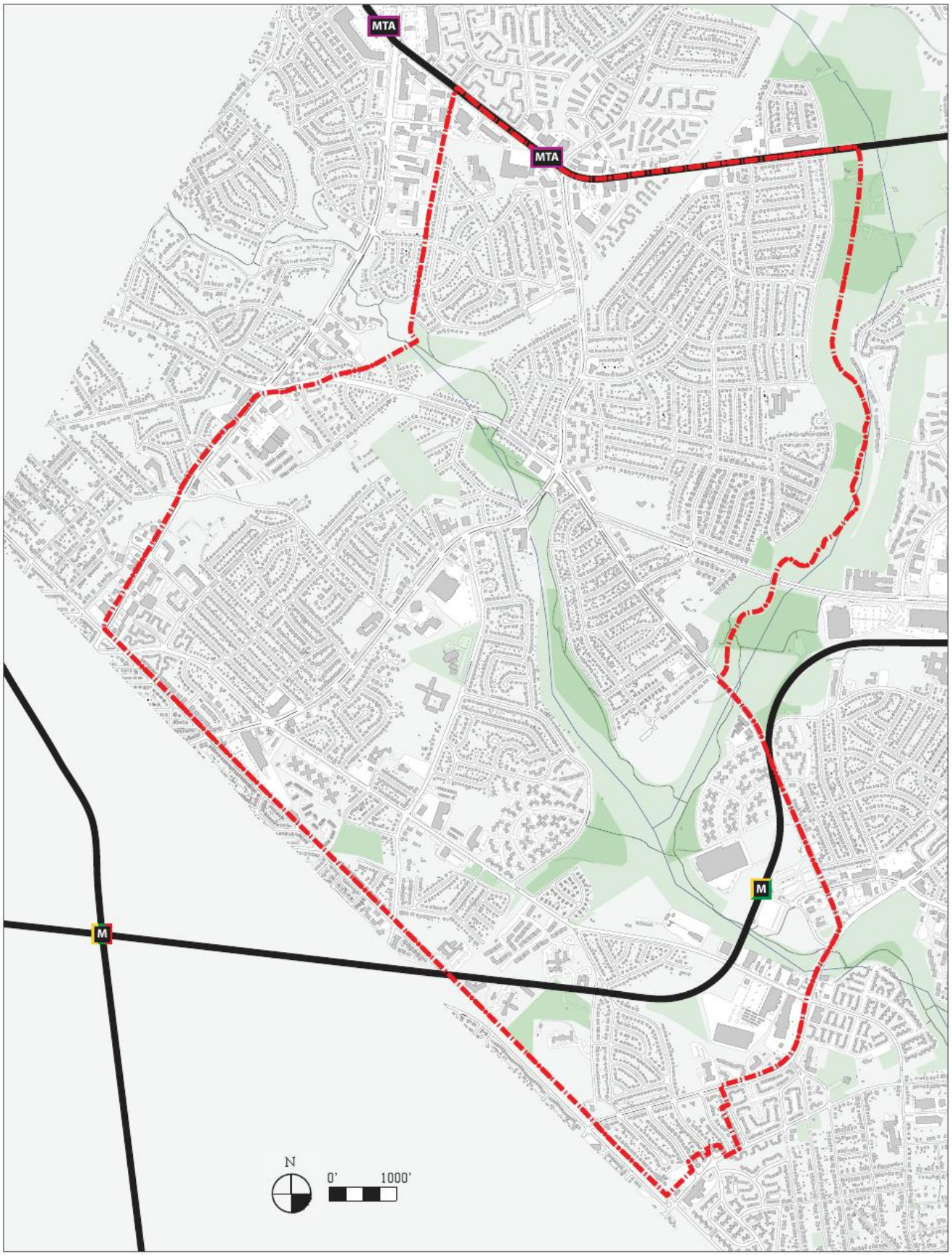
The study area garners its name from a 1763 land patent by William Dudley Digges for the 4,443 acre Chillum Castle Manor named after a relative's Chilham Castle in Kent, England. This was the largest holding in the area and included modern neighborhoods—Green Meadows, Lewisdale, Carole Highlands, and sections of Takoma Park and Langley Park. Like many communities in colonial Maryland, this area's early economic activity focused on tobacco

Single-family home in Hampshire Knolls.

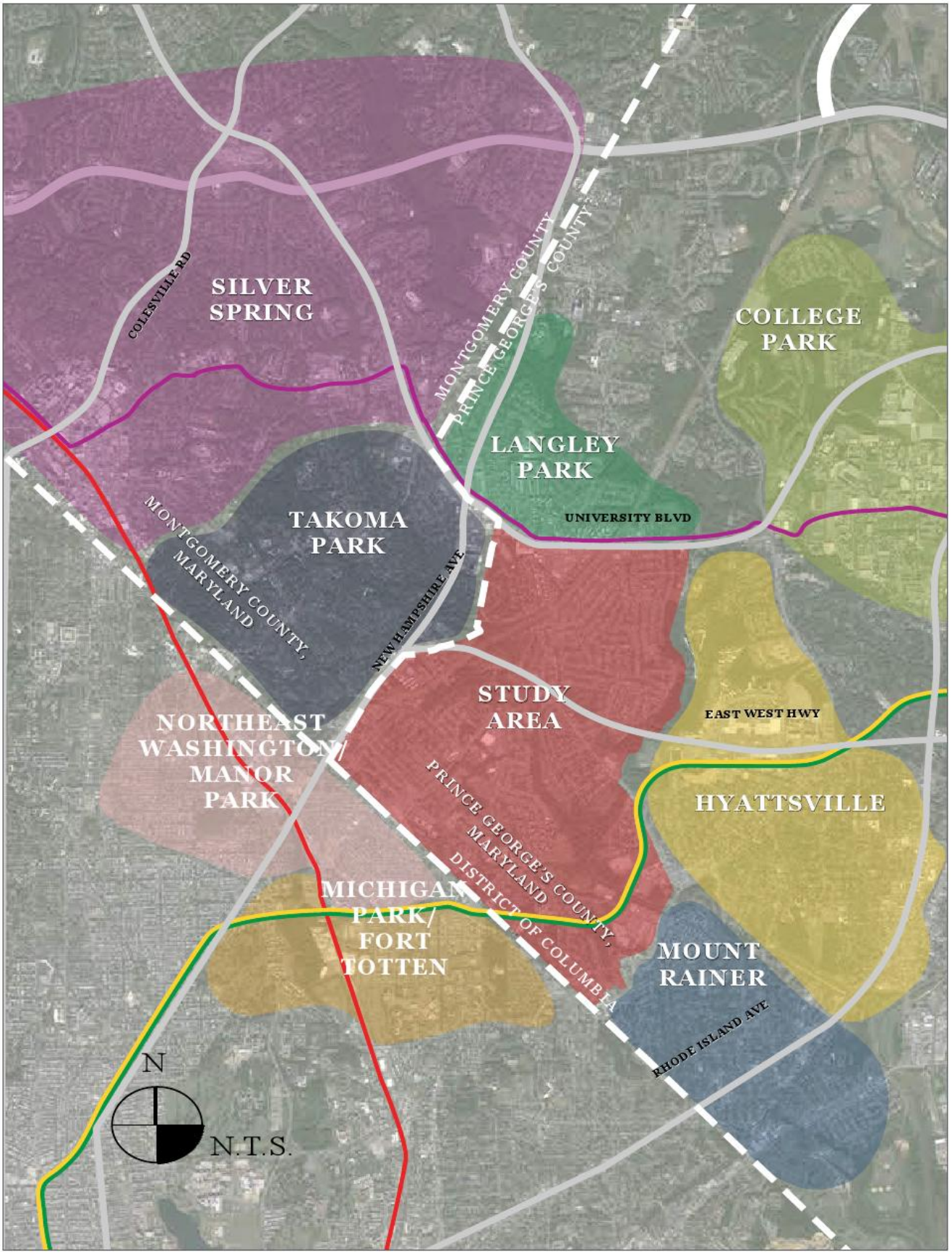
cultivation. Tobacco was phased out of the area by the 1800s and the large land holdings converted to other types of farming. Roads into Washington, D.C., including Riggs Road, Sligo Mill Road (now New Hampshire Avenue), Sargent Road, and Queens Chapel Road, connected the farms with a market for their goods.

For over 100 years, life continued in this pattern for residents of the study area with steady gains in housing and population while still maintaining a rural character. Like many small communities at the edge of cities, the return of World War II veterans and high population growth in the mid-1940s and early 1950s resulted in the conversion of farmland into housing. Although some of this change began in the 1930s, the post-War boom greatly sped the development from rural farms to suburban housing. Five distinct neighborhoods separated by both natural and man-made barriers encompass the community: Chillum, Hampshire Knolls, Carole Highlands, Lewisdale, and Avonridge. Unlike other expansions into the suburbs in the Washington, D.C. area that were fueled by streetcar lines such as Chevy Chase, the greater Chillum area's expansion took place with the increased use of automobiles. Today, these neighborhoods continue to develop their own character and conditions based on the demographics and the way the homes were originally built. The following findings for the five neighborhoods influenced how the consultant team developed recommendations specific to each.

Map 1. Study Area



Map 2. Regional Map



Relevant Previous Plans and Priorities

The study area overlaps or abuts existing plan boundaries. These plans provide guidance for the future development and redevelopment of the surrounding area through zoning changes, transportation enhancements, open space strategy, and other urban design solutions. The *Greater Chillum Community Study* envisions recommendations that coordinate with these existing plans that were written with extensive community input. The following highlights important recommendations from each of the plans that are relevant to the study area and should be implemented in coordination with the recommendations contained in the *Greater Chillum Community Study*.

New Hampshire Avenue Corridor Concept Plan

Purpose: The City of Takoma Park undertook the corridor plan to identify solutions to make the declining corridor a community asset through roadway and urban design improvements on New Hampshire Avenue as it leaves Washington, D.C. In Maryland, New Hampshire Avenue is the border between The City of Takoma Park in Montgomery County and Prince George's County. This plan develops a conceptual framework for improving multimodal mobility while creating opportunities to strengthen economic redevelopment at commercial nodes like the Ethan Allen gateway at New Hampshire Avenue and East West Highway.

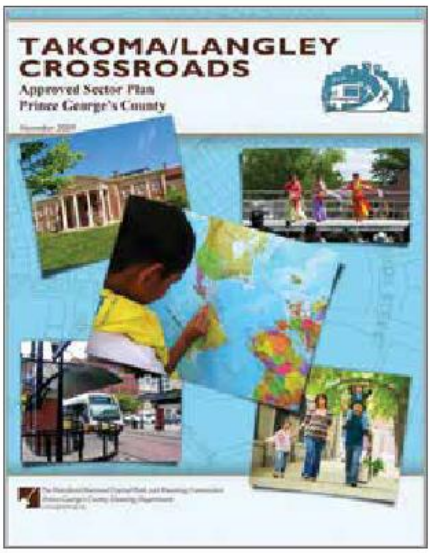
New Hampshire Avenue Corridor Concept Plan

Relevant Recommendations

- Improve roadway design for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users to accommodate "through traffic" by creating a multiway boulevard.
    - Redesign intersection at East West Highway and New Hampshire Boulevard to reduce corner radii and reduce pedestrian crossing distances.
    - Provide safety strip median.
    - Create turning lanes at intersections.
    - Provide parallel parking.
    - Enhance transit waiting areas and bus pull-offs.
    - Design streetscape with people-friendly amenities.
    - Enhance crosswalks.

- Improve transit opportunities
  - Enhance transit service in the corridor in conjunction with redevelopment.
  - Create a new circulator route.
- Restore natural environment and open space
  - Improve landscape connectivity
  - Restore the Takoma Branch south of Ray Road
- Redevelop Appropriately
  - Develop new pedestrian-oriented buildings along the corridor.
  - Mix uses.
  - Develop parking appropriate for mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented places.
  - Develop new housing as an integral component of new development along the corridor.
  - "Green" the corridor and enhance parks and natural areas.
  - Redevelop the strip centers at Ethan Allen and New Hampshire Avenue and East West Highway with a finer street grid, medium-density residential, and small scale commercial uses.
  - Redevelop commercial properties at the gateway of New Hampshire Avenue from Washington, D.C., with a diverse mix of uses, including medium-density residential and commercial that is compatible with nearby neighborhoods.
  - Introduce a gateway feature at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Eastern Avenue.
  - Encourage redevelopment at the Ray Road intersection to de-emphasize the PEPCO substation.

Approved Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan



Purpose: The sector plan for the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Plan addresses land use and transit-oriented development (TOD) in the community that straddles Montgomery County and Prince George's County, Maryland. The plan also addresses pedestrian safety, public transit connectivity, and strategies to strengthen economic opportunities for businesses.

Relevant Recommendations/Policies

- Land Use and Urban Design
  - Create TOD with greater density than the community average, a mix of uses, quality pedestrian environments, and a defined center at transit stations.
  - Use place-making to highlight identifiable neighborhoods, landmarks, and focal points.
  - Develop design guidelines to establish quality residential and commercial design of new construction.
  - Redevelop existing commercial sites to not mimic existing one-story buildings with large setbacks and surface parking.
  - Create density recommendations that allow for transit-oriented and mixed-use development.
  - Allow parallel, on-street parking and off-peak parking on main arterial roadways.
  - Increase urban tree canopy by planting and preserving existing healthy trees.
- Transportation
  - Convert roadways to complete streets.
  - Plan for the Purple Line light rail to create a multimodal network of connections to future stations.
  - Develop a transportation system that reduces dependency on the automobile by designing roadways for all modes of transportation, by creating a road network with redundancies, and by minimizing traffic intrusions on residential streets.
  - Transform Riggs Road and New Hampshire Avenue into major urban boulevards to support pedestrian-oriented development.
  - Expand bicycle route network.
  - Identify high-priority sidewalk and bicycle corridors that lead to schools, transit centers, and other activity centers.

- Codify routine accommodation of bicycles and pedestrians as part of all street improvements.
- Provide continuous neighborhood sidewalk and trail connections to Sligo Creek and the Northwest Branch.
- Increase local street connections by extending Holton Lane from Montgomery County and 14th Street from University Boulevard.

West Hyattsville Transit District Development Plan

Purpose: The West Hyattsville Transit District Development Plan creates a vision for the West Hyattsville Metro Station as a TOD and provides a visual overview of the West Hyattsville Transit District Overlay Zone at full build-out.

Approved Transit District Development Plan and
Transit District Overlay Zoning Map Amendment for the
West Hyattsville Transit District Overlay Zone
Prince George's County, Maryland
July 2006
The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission

Relevant Recommendations

- Land Use and Urban Design

  Moderate- to higher-density TOD with a mix of residential, office, and retail uses designed for access by pedestrians, cyclists, and automobiles.

  - Support TOD by definable neighborhoods.
  - Provide a hierarchy of green spaces, and preserve Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park.
- Transportation
  - Provide modal choice by creating complementary land uses and providing sufficient infrastructure for each transportation mode.
  - Transform the station design at the West Hyattsville Metro stop to better accommodate pedestrian access to the station.
  - Emphasize bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure for traffic calming.
  - Integrate new infill development with existing historical street network, and create a hierarchy of streets.
  - Create new infrastructure to increase connectivity to transit station and stops.

Common Elements throughout These Plans

- Create density and/or zoning to allow for mixed-use and TOD.
- Convert single-use commercial areas to mixed-use TOD with density dependent on the level of transit service.
- Improve pedestrian infrastructure.
  - Create a continuous network of sidewalks and connections to the trail system.
  - Improve streetscapes for better pedestrian experience.
- Develop street network that is designed for all transportation modes.
- Preserve existing park space.

Project Outreach

Throughout this project, citizen input and participation was essential to learning about the quality of life of the people most affected (advantaged or disadvantaged) by living and working in the study area. Several public participation tools and models were selected, all of which were used to garner the active participation of residents and leaders in the community. The precise methodology used was determined by the demographic analysis, size of study area, study objectives, and available resources. In all cases, the approach was strategic and tactical to ensure close coordination with The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) key staff, maximum citizen and stakeholder participation, transparent communication with the community, and quality technical review and analysis of the housing, transportation, urban design, and socioeconomic issues that are pivotal to the quality of life in the community.

In order to obtain the maximum input from the widest range of individuals in the study area, we determined that making meaningful contact with residents, business owners, and property owners had to be a top priority. Our goal was to increase the overall number of long-time community residents who participated in our outreach activities, while paying particular attention to hear from as many of the newly arrived immigrant populations as possible. We developed a relational phased approach for the outreach that included local businesses and churches, residents, civic associations, business owners, local developers, and land owners.

The actual outreach efforts began with the study team's participation in a Hispanic festival, followed by other public participation activities, and culminating with a large Town Hall public meeting. The circumstances and results of each of these principal categories of public outreach activities varied greatly. The logistics, lessons learned, results, and outcomes of each of our citizen outreach efforts are discussed in this section.

In order to obtain the maximum input from the widest range of individuals in the study area, we determined that making meaningful contact with residents, business owners, and property owners had to be a top priority.

September 2013 M-NCPPC Hispanic Festival

Location: University Hills Duck Pond Park

Activities: The project team had an interactive booth setup for festival participants to stop by at their leisure. We talked with approximately 100–150 people. Not all were willing to share information, and not all lived in the area. Most were multigenerational Hispanic families with young children. Many of the adults did not speak English, while most of the young people were fluent in English. We provided everyone who stopped by our booth with information about the study, and for those who resided in the study area, we opened the conversations by introducing ourselves in English or Spanish with

our bilingual study team members. Then, we asked festival goers to point out where they live on a large map of the study area. Each respondent was asked a general question about how they thought the study area could be improved, and the information learned is summarized below.

What We Learned from Hispanic Festival Attendees

- Most households own a single car, and the other adults in the family use public transportation.
- Most residents mentioned that their neighborhood had become more dangerous in the last few years, and police presence had increased.
- Most residents shop outside of the study area.
- Many find the traffic to be highly prohibitive to pedestrians despite the relatively good bus services.
- Most residents also said they work outside of the study area.

Hispanic festival activity.

November 2013 Stakeholder Meetings

Location: Rollingcrest Community Center

Activities: The study team conducted several stakeholder meetings. We paid particular attention to seeking the participation of a cross section of the community to include elected officials or representatives from the Councilman's office, civic organization presidents, representatives from the faith community, small and large businesses, property owners, educational institutions, and citizens who are known to be active and interested in participating in urban planning, public policy, and generally improving the

community. This category of citizens was targeted because of their unique political, financial, educational, or religious stake in what happens in the community.

The meeting was scheduled for two hours in the evening to take advantage of the window when people were off work and before they settled in at home for the evening. Our objective at these stakeholder meetings was to hear how these particular citizens thought the community needed to improve.

What We Learned from Stakeholders

- Long-time African-American residents feel like they are being pushed out of their neighborhoods by a new immigrant population. Respondents felt new residents do not take care of the homes they live in and have degraded the quality of housing. As the quality has fallen, many feel the community is not as strong as it once was.
- A recurring theme from many residents was that they felt safety and maintenance are the biggest issues concerning the neighborhoods, but the new immigrant population is not completely the cause of the issues.
- The Triumphant Church acknowledged that they are located in a changing neighborhood, and they want to get more involved in the community.

January 2014 Public Meeting

Location: Rollingcrest Community Center

Activities: This initial public meeting focused on identifying issues and gathering observations from the community. The project team gave a presentation that reviewed the objectives of the study; outlined the focus areas of housing, social and economic development, connectivity and transportation, and land use; displayed the preliminary findings of the SWOT analysis; and finally, reviewed public feedback the team had received in previous outreach efforts. For the remainder of the meeting, small groups were formed to discuss issues residents thought should be addressed immediately and long-term goals that would provide sustainable solutions for significant improvement in the community.

What We Learned from the Public Meeting

- Residents agreed that the retail quality in the neighborhood was deficient and that the area lacked a community center for the residents to go to for dinner, coffee, and small errands. During brainstorming sessions, most expressed an interest in mixed-use redevelopment of existing strip centers.

- Preservation and improvement of the single-family, residential neighborhoods is very important.
- Residents would like to see improvement of the aging rental apartments.
- Participants expressed a desire to see improved enforcement of existing codes for landscaping, signage, and housing.
- Many would like to see improved pedestrian infrastructure, like better lighting, sidewalks on all streets, and safer routes to major destinations like West Hyattsville Metro Station and Prince George's Plaza.

Councilman Will Campos speaks at the January 2014 meeting.

February–March 2014 Stakeholder Interviews

Location: Varied

Activities: Members of the study team interviewed commercial property owners to understand their future desire for their property, learn their vision for the study area, and get feedback on their market perceptions.

What We Learned from Stakeholders

- Each property owner interviewed owns a commercial strip shopping center that is nearly 100 percent leased.
- Generally, each owner is not immediately able to redevelop the site but, as market conditions improve, would be interested in providing a mix of housing and retail in the future.

- Some property owners discussed general frustration with the current zoning and signage approval process.
- Several of the property owners would like to see a more streamlined system for zoning and development review.

April 2014 Public Meeting

Location: Rollingcrest Community Center

Activities: This second, large open meeting allowed the study team to present the draft recommendations and allowed extensive time for participants' questions and answers following the presentation.

What We Learned from Citizens

- Participants had several questions, all of which fell into the categories of parameters of the study, personal issues that were granulated down to trash pick-up and apartment building maintenance, access to shopping resources, and transit options.
- While the residents were glad that the consultant team was proposing recommendations for the neighborhood, they were concerned with the immediate code violations happening in the study area.
- They were concerned that none of the recommendations would happen in a quick enough time period to affect their daily life.

Citizens share table discussion results, January 2014.

April–May 2014 Agency Interviews

Location: *Various*

Activities: The study team held a series of meetings with stakeholder public agencies, including the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), the Revenue Authority, the Redevelopment Authority, and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

What We Learned from Agency Interviews

- WMATA's preliminary vision for the West Hyattsville Metro Station is for the development of residential mixed-use. The station is to become a model for a sustainable community.
- DHCD recognizes that housing challenges in the greater Chillum community are similar to those in Langley Park where there is a lack of sufficient affordable housing. Approaches to solving the problem should be used in both communities.
- This meeting discussed the Greater Chillum Community Study draft recommendations for code enforcement. The Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement discussed updates to the 25 Point Plan for the future of code enforcement in Prince George's County; most notably, the transition is to new technology to improve reporting and tracking of code enforcement complaints and citations. Ideas were discussed for using code complaint and violation information to inform the public investment and redevelopment decisions.

Existing Conditions

Strategically located, the greater Chillum community study area is transitioning from a suburban community centered around the automobile to an urban, inner-Beltway community. Suburban characteristics once defined the greater Chillum area as lower densities, more homogeneous incomes and demographics, and daily needs located outside of walking distance of most residents. Today, urban characteristics are beginning to become the norm, such as larger families with lower incomes that require more affordable, higher-density housing, more diversity in incomes and race, and less reliance on automobiles as a primary means to access daily needed goods and services.

Given these changing demographics and the need for a more walkable environment, pressure exists to provide adequate housing for the influx of immigrants to the area, maintain affordable housing choices, improve property maintenance practices, and strengthen community identity. Like many nearby communities, the late 1960s shifted the demographics of the community from predominantly Caucasian to include a large proportion of African-Americans. Recently, another dramatic demographic shift has occurred as a large immigrant population has moved to the study area. In particular, Hispanic immigrants from Central America have changed the cultural makeup in the multifamily and single-family housing neighborhoods. This shift has created dramatic changes in household size, retail demand, transportation usage, educational levels, and employment. Overall, household size in the study area has increased in many cases in an effort to cut down on housing costs. It has also led to a shift from owner-occupied to renter-occupied, single-family homes. The market for housing faces competition from nearby markets. Recent sale prices are just above current assessed value, and foreclosures are comparatively low, but short sales have recently increased. This has affected the standard of property maintenance and caused cultural conflict between the new and existing residents of the study area. The most significant concerns that stakeholders raised were the perceived lack of code enforcement and the demographic shifts in Prince George's County caused by both the move of lower-income Washington, D.C., residents and immigrants into the neighborhoods.

Many of the newer residents of the area are more dependent on public transportation such as the bus and heavy rail. The increased use of public transportation highlights the deficiencies in the existing infrastructure. Current roadway designs support fast vehicular movements but don't provide sufficient networks for pedestrians and

Bus stop in Lewisdale.

cyclists. Major and minor connector streets are often lacking sidewalks, and most bus stops are without shelters.

Market analysis suggests that with the growing immigrant population, medium household incomes will remain below the Prince George's County average through 2018, indicating a need for affordable housing, employment, and retail choices within walking distance of transit. Employment opportunities in the study area are limited to retail, service, and few healthcare positions. These jobs are not large economic growth generators. Dampening the opportunity for quality employment growth is the area's low level of education. Additionally, most residents must travel outside the study area to work, with an average commute time of over 30 minutes.

The recent influx of immigrants has also increased demand for ethnic businesses, but lower incomes overall have caused a shift in the quality of retail and restaurant offerings. Long-term residents express an interest in higher quality restaurants and retail options.

Given the historical development pattern previously explained in detail, the study area has a history of separated land uses. The majority of commercial development is predominantly single-story, strip retail on major vehicular corridors and at major intersections. The retail is almost fully leased and offers grocery stores, ethnic retailers, low-cost restaurants, and neighborhood-serving retail. A small amount of office exists on New Hampshire Avenue, and light industrial uses are on Chillum Road. The area is largely built out, so future development will likely be small infill projects or the redevelopment of existing properties. Although the commercial properties are fully leased, they face regional competition from nearby regional nodes like Prince George's Plaza.

The goal of this study is to give the community and Prince George's County recommendations that harness assets and address deficiencies in order to improve the lives of people who live in the greater Chillum community. From an examination of the existing conditions, implementable strategies were identified for the study area and, more broadly, Prince George's County.

Socioeconomic Analysis

Socioeconomic data provide a foundation for understanding a community, its challenges, and its potential. For the *Greater Chillum Community Study*, socioeconomic data support local knowledge about the level of cultural diversity within this largely residential community. It also provides a basis for understanding current and future needs for housing, goods, services, and employment. As described further in the methodology section, data were collected for a variety of geographies to better understand the character of the Chillum community and how it relates to its surrounding neighborhoods and Prince George's County.

The Chillum community has a diverse and growing immigrant population. Currently, the African-American and immigrant populations make up a large portion of the Chillum community. As the immigrant and Hispanic populations grow over the next several years, projections indicate a decline in other races including the African-American population. Growth in the immigrant population will likely continue to shift household makeup in the study area, as immigrant households tend to be larger (oftentimes because of multigenerational households and high child birth). The growing immigrant population also indicates a potential shift in preferences for goods and services as demand changes to reflect an even more culturally diverse population.

Household size in Chillum is anticipated to increase by 2018. Nationally, household size is decreasing as retirement-age adults are choosing to age in place, young couples are delaying parenthood, and single-parent households are becoming more prevalent. However, the growing immigrant population in this area is causing the opposite effect. The influx of Hispanic populations with a greater frequency of larger, multigenerational households and immigrant workers seeking affordable living situations is projected to help increase the average household size by 2018. The housing needs of these larger households will likely influence the housing market in the Chillum area as well as impact the quantity/type of goods and services needed to serve this community.

Households in Chillum have low-to-moderate incomes. Although larger households can indicate additional income earners, consistently low per-capita income reflects median household incomes in the Chillum community that will remain below that of Prince George's County through 2018. Continued low-to-moderate income levels suggest that affordable housing and essential goods and services will be priorities for the residents of Chillum. Large numbers of households with little disposable income can also limit the economic growth potential of the Chillum community by decreasing the amount of goods and services purchased in a predominantly service-oriented economy.

The growing immigrant population also indicates a potential shift in preferences for goods and services as demand changes to reflect an even more culturally diverse population.

Table 3. Neighborhood Demographics (%)

Neighborhood	Caucasian	African-American	Hispanic
Avonridge	11.1	56.9	36.9
Carole Highlands	25.5	28.9	34.7
Chillum	14.8	54.2	41.3
Hampshire Knolls	9.4	55.3	40.9
Lewisdale	20.4	26.6	43.4

*All numbers are 2013 estimates

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Ersi, RKG Associates, 2013

Table 4. Households

Neighborhood	Census 2000[1]	Census 2010	2013 Estimate	2018 Projection
Avonridge	1,401	1,372	1,416	1,491
Carole Highlands	858	758	723	702
Chillum	3,436	3,257	3,234	3,282
Hampshire Knolls	2,531	2,531	2,534	2,591
Lewisdale	2,560	2,270	2,401	2,587
Surrounding Area	29,557	29,566	29,929	31,309
Prince George's County	286,599	304,042	306,226	315,357

[1] 2000 census data are expressed using 2010 geographies.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Ersi, RKG Associates, 2013

Employment industries in the Chillum area are not major economic growth generators. The two major employment industries in the Chillum area are retail trade and health care/social assistance. Many of the businesses within these industries most likely serve the immediate community. However, if preferences shift and median household income remains below the County average, these sectors may struggle to expand. This has the potential to limit the growth of the Chillum community economy and reduce its ability to adapt to changing population needs for goods and services.

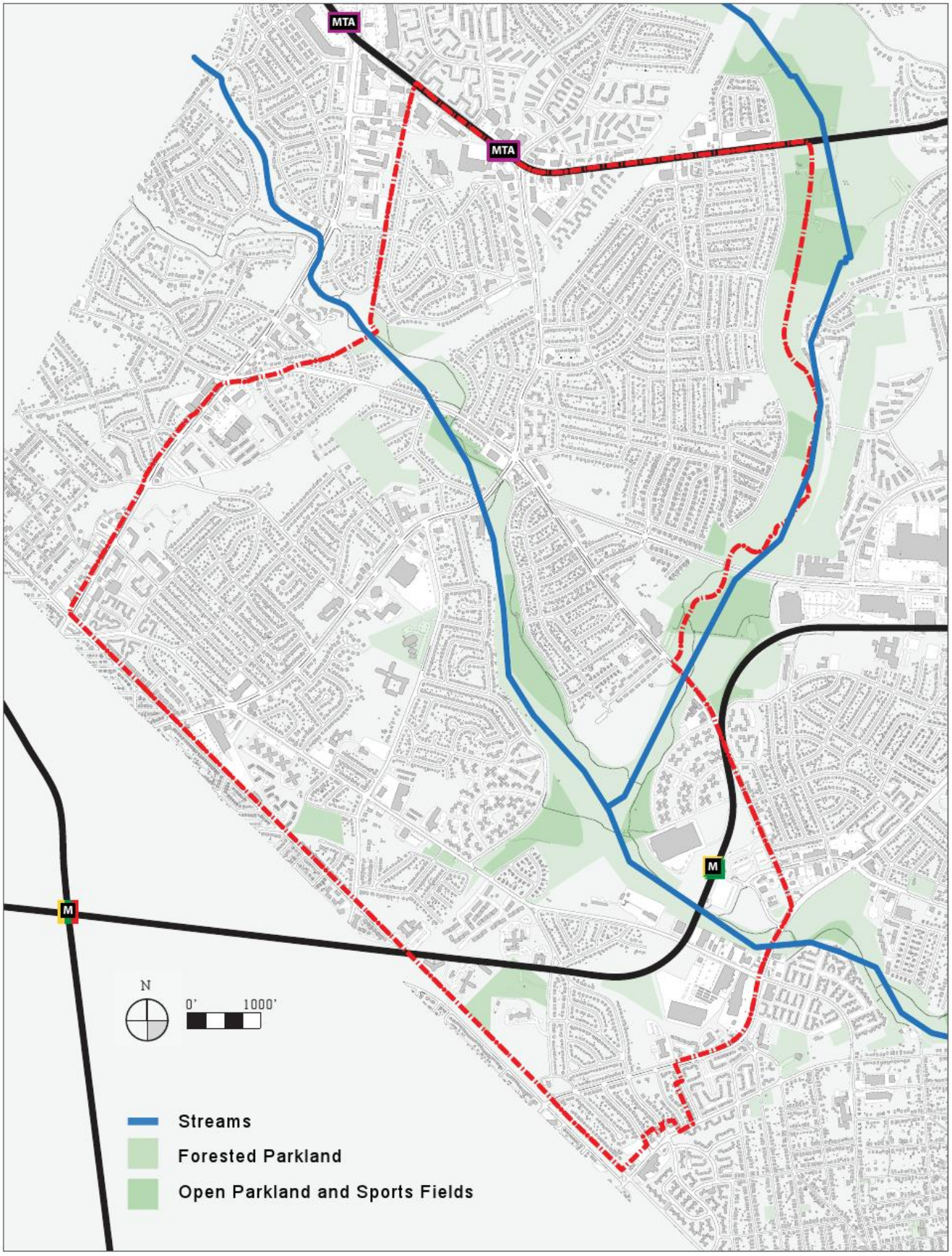
Table 5. Income

Neighborhood	2013 Estimate	2018 Projection	% Change 13–18	Annual % Change 13–18
Avonridge	$44,387	$49,158	10.7	2.1
Carole Highlands	$56,256	$71,821	27.7	5.5
Chillum	$47,158	$53,365	13.2	2.6
Hampshire Knolls	$48,805	$56,710	16.2	3.2
Lewisdale	$62,563	$73,106	16.9	3.4
Surrounding Area	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Prince George's County	$71,691	$83,966	17.1	3.4
	Per Capita Income			
Avonridge	$22,199	$24,998	12.6	2.5
Carole Highlands	$21,940	$25,114	14.5	2.9
Chillum	$24,124	$27,334	13.3	2.7
Hampshire Knolls	$20,221	$23,381	15.6	3.1
Lewisdale	$17,823	$19,831	11.3	2.3
Chillum Neighborhoods	$20,877	$23,594	13.0	2.6
Surrounding Area	$28,517	$32,667	14.6	2.9
Prince George's County	$32,353	$37,057	14.5	2.9

[1] 2000 census data are expressed using 2010 geographies.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Ersi, RKG Associates, 2013

Map 3. Natural Amenities



There is a large amount of labor force mobility in the Chillum community. Most of the employed population in Chillum has a low level of education attainment and work in jobs in moderate-to-low skill industries. Workers who live in the community commute to these jobs elsewhere in Prince George's County, Montgomery County, and Washington, D.C. Only a small number live and work in the Chillum area. With such a large number of residents working outside of the area, the economic stability of the region has the potential to impact the market for housing and goods and services in Chillum.

Housing and Development Analysis

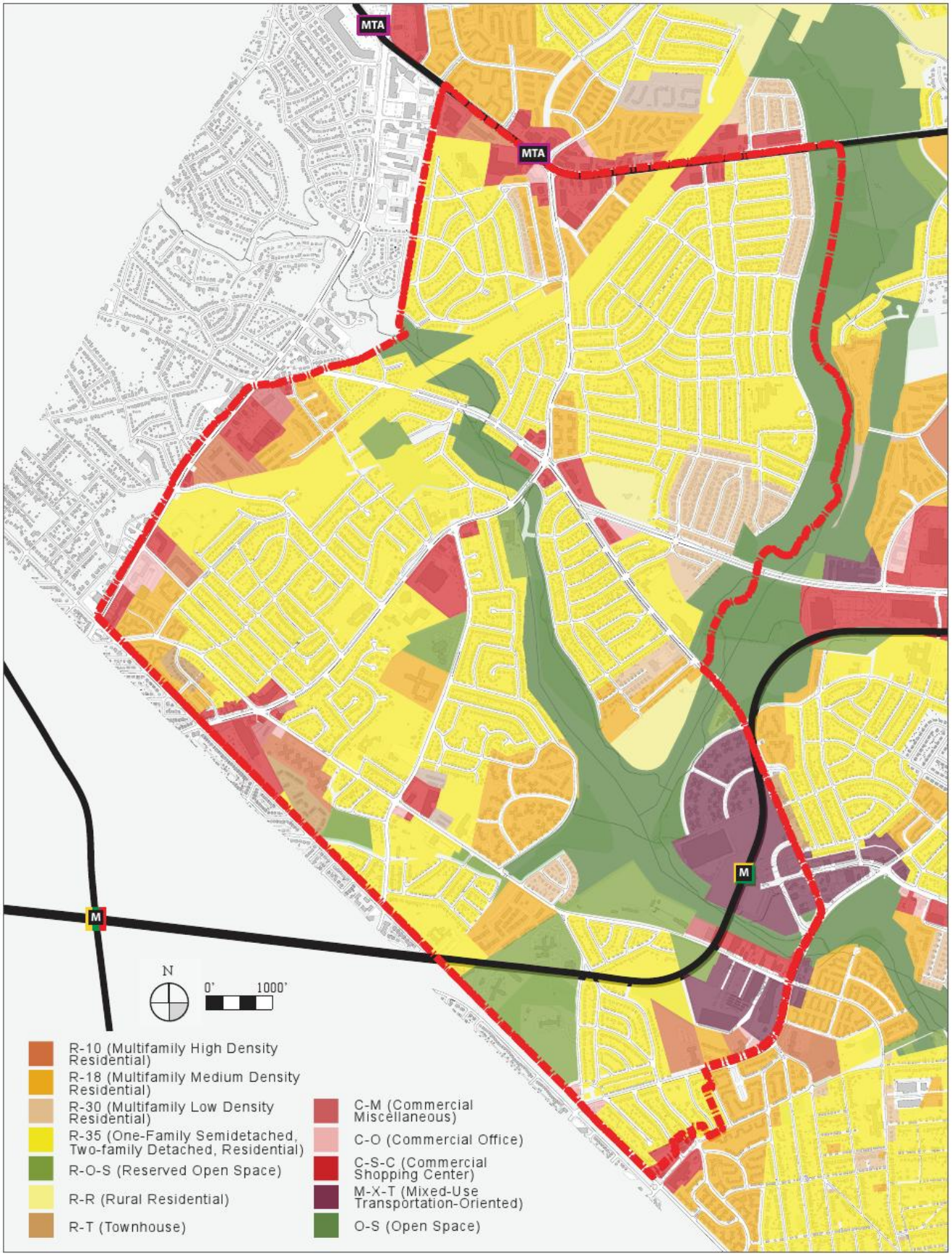
Understanding the existing development environment, recent construction activity, and the capacity of vacant land for future development provides a foundation to build strategies to address housing and development needs of the Chillum community in the future. Simply put, analyzing development activity is a critical component of measuring real estate supply and demand for a given market. The current land use composition of the area provides a snapshot of the existing conditions within this community. The Chillum community is a high-residential area with community-focused commercial developments along major roads and intersections. Further analysis into development activity in the recent past suggests that little has changed in the physical environment of the study area since 2003.

The Chillum community is a high-residential area with community-focused commercial developments along major roads and intersections.

The Chillum community is generally built out, resulting in very little development activity over the last 10 years. Low levels of development activity support visual evidence that the Chillum community has little vacant, developable land. A lack of development activity suggests that the current zoning code does not allow sufficient density increases to financially justify redevelopment. Since 2000, the population in the Chillum area has increased and is projected to continue to do so through 2018. Growing immigrant and Hispanic populations coincide with a projected increase in household size throughout Chillum. Anecdotally, the consultants are learning that houses are being converted into single-room occupancies and households are occupying housing above their intended capacity. As a result, there is likely demand for additional development activity, and if the new development is priced appropriately for this demand, it is not financially feasible for the private sector.

Any substantial future development activity will require infill and/or redevelopment. There are a small number of vacant lots in the Chillum community. Most are less than half an acre, and few are contiguous. Limited vacant land, paired with growth in population and households, has the potential to present a challenge for new development. Many of the larger properties are either publicly owned and/or encumbered with physical or natural limitations, such as wetland and infrastructure (i.e.,

Map 4. Existing Zoning



power distribution structures). Therefore, any new development will require redevelopment and/or infill on currently built properties. The study area's strip commercial parcels and the property immediately around the West Hyattsville Metro Station are the most likely opportunities.

Table 6. Land Use (2013)

Land Use	Acres	Total (%)
Bare Ground and Exposed Rock	87.6	6.1
Commercial	110.3	7.8
Forest	102.3	7.2
Institutional	208.4	14.6
Parks and Open Space	82.0	5.7
Residential (High Density)	26.3	1.8
Residential (Low Density)	577.7	40.5
Residential (Low-Medium Density)	47.7	3.3
Residential (Medium-High Density)	152.7	10.7
Mixed-Use Residential	0.5	0
Transportation	14.2	1.0
Wetlands	16.6	1.2
Total	1,426.3	100

Source: M-NCPPC, PG Atlas (2013)

Urban Design Analysis

The Anacostia Northwest Branch Trail divides the neighborhoods as much as the large thoroughfares.

The existing urban form of the Chillum community has set the immigrant resident population at a disadvantage in regard to connectivity, walkability, transit, and job access. The study area has many natural amenities that have been utilized for parks and trails; however, these amenities also act as divisions and reduce connectivity between the neighborhoods. The following further explores the different aspects of urban form in the study area. Through understanding zoning, transit, the environment, and the street grid of the study area, opportunities and challenges for growth and change can be identified.

The current zoning is mainly single-use zones; the only mixed-use zoning is available in Avondale near the West Hyattsville Metro Station. The greater Chillum area has yet to receive a comprehensive zoning update to allow for mixed-use, transit-oriented development along the bus corridors and the future light rail line (see Map 4). Only the area around the West Hyattsville Metro Station has been rezoned, and it

has yet to be redeveloped from a retail strip center. The result of this zoning and the current development is that no mixed-use buildings currently exist within the study area and that the residential neighborhoods are separated from the retail strip centers along the major connecting corridors. The existing commercial zones are also sparse and mainly community-serving retail. The lack of larger commercial zoning illustrates why most of the residents commute out of the community for work, further making this a "bedroom community". However, a diversity of housing types is available in the study area. Single-family homes, mid-rise and high-rise apartments, and condos can all be found throughout each of the five neighborhoods in the study area.

Many natural amenities exist in the study area, but they currently create more of a division than a connection between the neighborhoods. Both the Sligo Creek and the Northwest Branch Anacostia River run through and alongside the study area (see Map 3). Both their stream beds have largely been left natural with both forested and open parkland. Large changes in topography lead from the residential neighborhoods to the stream beds and wetlands, and the large amounts of impervious surface from the existing residential neighborhoods contribute to the large Federal Emergency Management Agency flood plain. These stream beds divide the northeast portion of the study area from the southwest in a decisive manner. Man-made thoroughfares further divide the study area into distinct quadrants and provide boundaries for the neighborhoods within the study area. In addition, the parks and natural areas have few pedestrian amenities and are often avoided due to safety concerns.

Large parking lots sit in front of strip retail centers.

Urban design characteristics are primarily suburban in nature with limited pedestrian facilities and large parking lots. While most of the primary roads have sidewalks, several neighborhoods lack sidewalks on at least one side of the street to allow people to connect to the major routes where the bus stops are located (see Map 5). However, most of the schools, religious institutions, and cultural amenities within the study area have sidewalks within five-minute walking distances for pedestrian use. The retail suffers from the large distances between pedestrian crossings and large, street-lining parking lots.

Table 7. Prince George's County Regional Average Commute Times (2011) (%)						
	Prince George's County	Washington, D.C.	Montgomery County	Howard County	Anne Arundel County	Arlington County
% Less than 10 Minutes	4.7	6.0	5.1	6.3	9.1	7.3
% 60 or more Minutes	19.6	9.2	17.1	12.9	12.6	4.9
Average travel time to work (minutes)	36.6	30.1	35.0	31.0	29.7	27.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Table 8. Prince George's County Regional Mode Share (2011) (%)						
	Prince George's County	Washington, D.C.	Montgomery County	Howard County	Anne Arundel County	Arlington County
Drive Alone	64.1	35.9	66.1	80.8	80.3	52.8
Carpool	12.6	6.5	10.3	8.1	9.4	7.4
Public Transportation	17.4	37.6	15	3.8	3.1	27.4

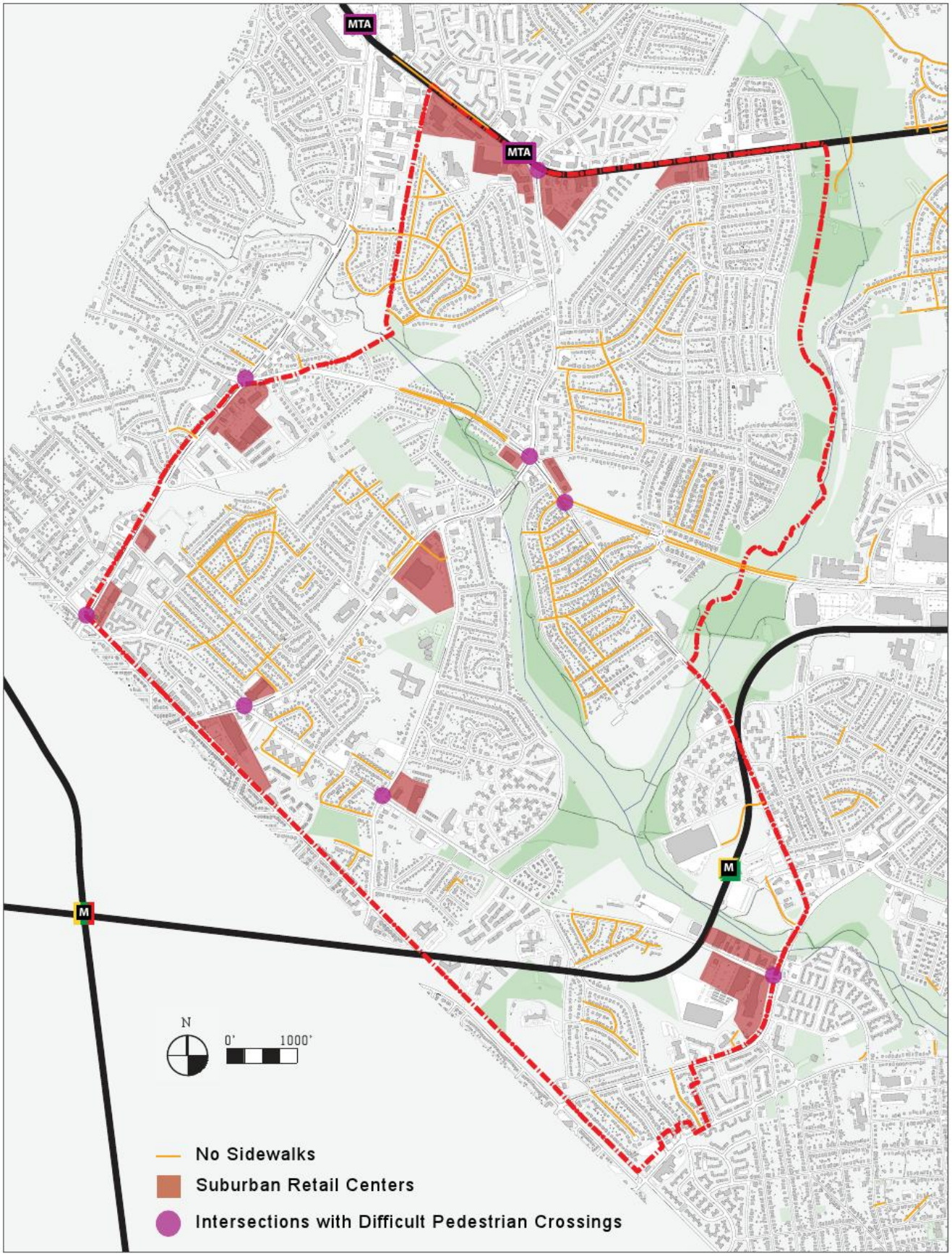
Table 9. Recent Planning Efforts
New Hampshire Avenue Corridor Concept Plan
Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan
Purple Line Project
West Hyattsville TDOZ
Ager Road Complete Streets Project

Transportation Analysis

Recent planning efforts (see Table 8) in the community have increased due to its diverse and growing population as well as its attractiveness to newcomers seeking proximity to several major Metro stations, Montgomery County, and Washington, D.C. The study area is a largely residential one with the majority of the population commuting outside of the area for work. These characteristics influence the assessment of existing infrastructure and redevelopment needs for the Chillum community.

Demand for a variety of transportation options is growing in the community. Regionwide trends in transportation have been creating a demand for new and different transportation infrastructure needs. According to the Transportation and Mobility section of the *Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan,* the County has an average commute time of 36.60

Map 5. Suburban Characteristics



minutes, the highest in the region (see Table 7). Also, about 17 percent of workers commute by transit, second only to Washington, D.C., in the region (see Table 8). Given the county's adjacency to Washington, D.C., and growing population, the demand on transportation infrastructure will continue to grow.

Development patterns create connectivity challenges for existing and growing demographics of the community. As noted in the socioeconomic analysis and development analysis, the study area has one of the highest concentrations of international populations in the United States (see Table 3 for neighborhood demographics). This population and diversity is projected to increase in the coming years. Furthermore, over 50 percent of land use is residential and over 40 percent is low-density residential. Commercial land uses make up less than eight percent and are typically concentrated along commercial strips (see Table 6). Fewer than 100 commuters live and work within the study area while the majority commute outside the area for work. The concentrated areas of commercial space further emphasize the need for consistent and continuous connectivity throughout the area. The large number of commuters moving in and out of the area on a daily basis present an opportunity for regional transit commuting.

Concentrations of population over 65 years of age are where pedestrian ADA compliance and transit accessibility are key concerns. In the Chillum study area, populations over 65 years old are concentrated between Riggs Road and Sargent Road and south of 19th Avenue in southwest Chillum (see Map 6). Formal paratransit service is not available in the area.

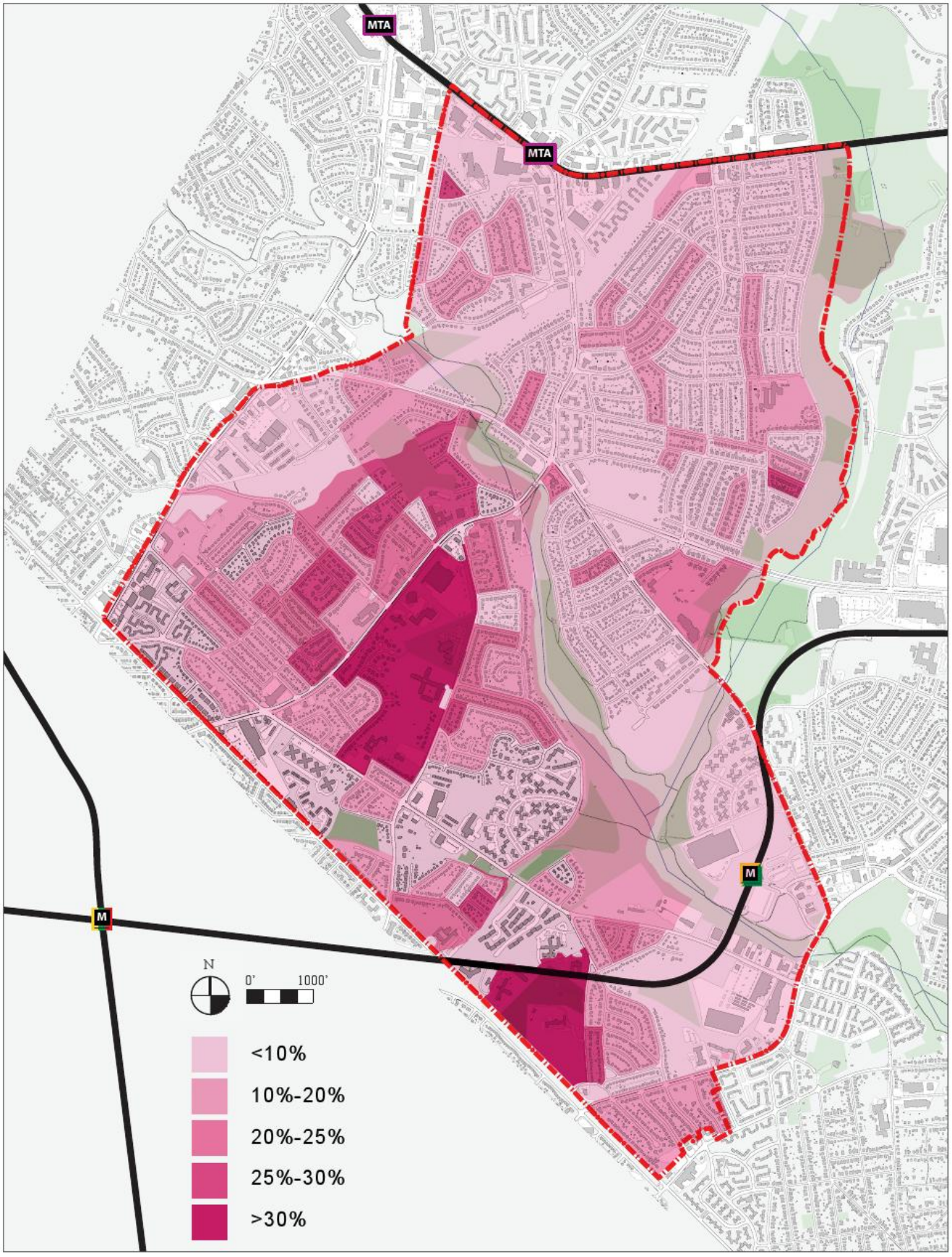
Commute patterns support accessible transit choices. Areas within Lewisdale, Chillum, and Avondale exist where zero-car households exceed 25 percent (see Map 7). As previously stated, many residents work in the downtown Washington, D.C., area as well as Montgomery and Arlington Counties (see Tables 6 and 7). Approximately 25 percent of workers have a commute to Washington, D.C., and Virginia of less than 10 miles. The lack of car ownership and a demand for regional commuting emphasize the key role accessibility to transit can play in many Chillum residents' lives.

Existing transportation infrastructure does not fully support varied transportation choices for community residents.

1. Existing Transit Facilities

The Chillum community relies on Prince George's County's TheBus and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metrobus service as its main forms of transit. There are 14 bus routes that run through the area. Arterial roads in the area are generally populated with a substantial number of WMATA bus stops while there are only a few collector and local

Map 6. Population Over 65 Years Old



roads that have bus stops for TheBus. The cul-de-sac nature of the residential areas creates limited connectivity between residents and the various bus stop locations. With the exception of three bus routes, peak hour headways are typically between 20 to 45 minutes throughout most of the study area.

Table 10. Labor Force Commute Distance [1]		
	2011	**Percentage**
<10 Miles	87.6	6.1
10 to 24 Miles	110.3	7.8
25 to 50 Miles	102.3	7.2
>50 Miles	208.4	14.6
Total	82.0	5.7

[1] Distance calculated using census block locations

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, RKG Associates, Inc, 2013

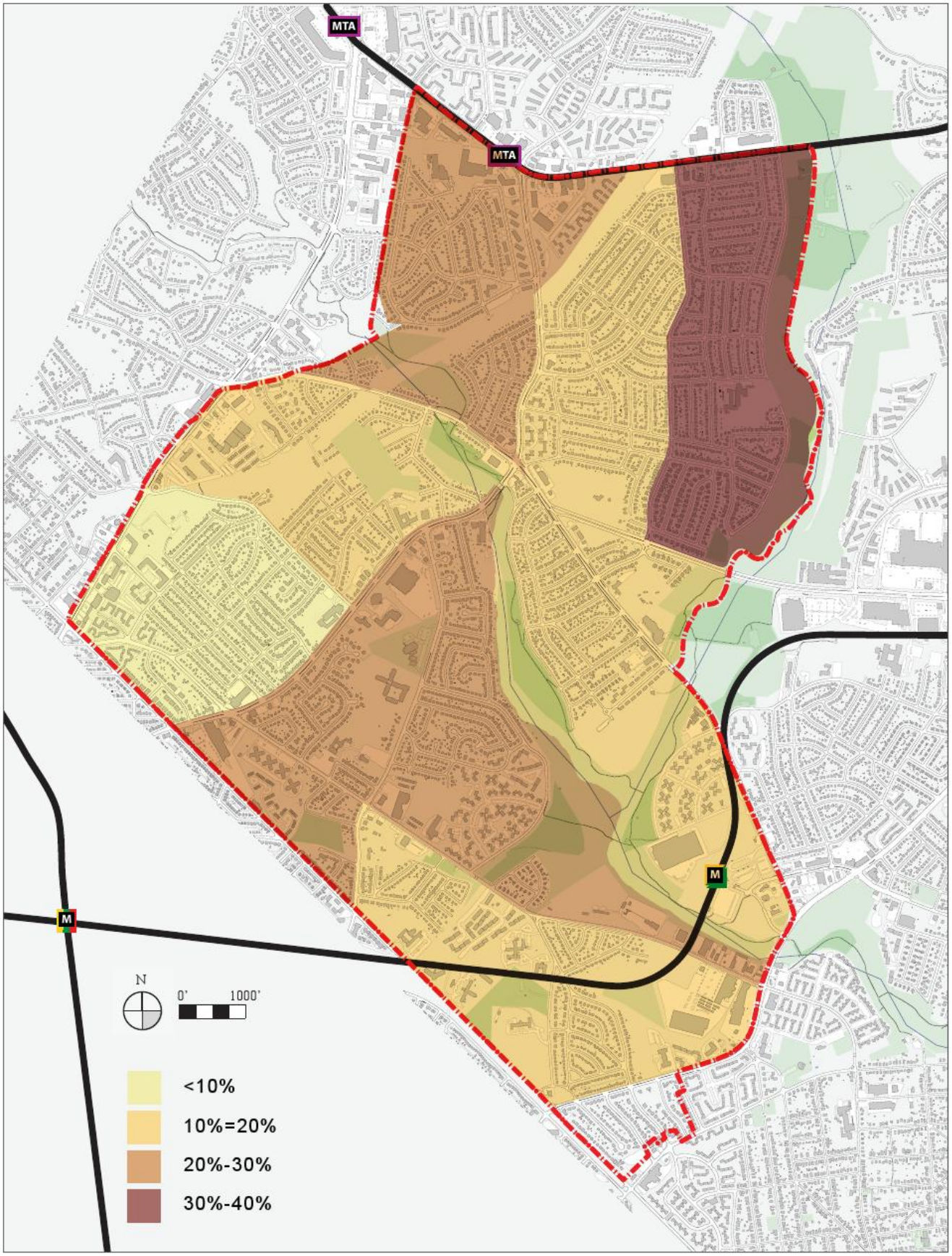
2. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Pedestrian connections between neighborhoods and to transit are key to providing connections to many land uses and transit stations in the area.

Many residents live within walking or biking distance of a transit stop. However, sidewalks in the Chillum community are generally fragmented and incomplete. Bicycle facilities are limited and include a bike lane on Riggs Road and the Sligo Creek Trail. Pedestrian safety has been highlighted as a key challenge along Riggs Road, New Hampshire Avenue, and East West Highway. Pedestrian connections between neighborhoods and to transit are key to providing connections to many land uses and transit stations in the area. The following studies have also evaluated pedestrian facilities and connectivity and outlined plans for improvements:

- Ager Road Project
- Pedestrian to Transit Accessibility Prioritization Study
- New Hampshire Avenue Corridor Concept Plan
- Ethan Allen Gateway Streetscape Project

Map 7. Zero-Car Households



Recommendations

The *Greater Chillum Community Study*, through community engagement, stakeholder outreach, and the cooperation of various Prince George's County agencies, makes recommendations aimed at improving the lives and livelihoods of residents and business owners. In order to complete this, the recommendations focus on implementable changes within the community to improve walkability and pedestrian safety, preserve neighborhood character, address code violations, improve owner-occupied housing and rental residential opportunities for a variety of incomes, create economic opportunities, and strengthen community identity.

The study area specific recommendations are broken down into these topic areas:

- Neighborhoods and Sense of Place
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Connectivity and Transportation
- Redevelopment and Revitalization

The goal of these strategies is to enable the community to take advantage of the availability of a variety of housing types near major transit stops and major employment and to improve the ability of property owners and business owners to thrive. This can be achieved through the preservation and enhancement of community character, the improvement of connectivity, and the increase in economic opportunities for residents and business owners.

The goal of these strategies is to enable the community to take advantage of the availability of a variety of housing types near major transit stops and major employment and to improve the ability of property owners and business owners to thrive.

Single-family residential.

Commercial shopping center.

Neighborhoods and Sense of Place

Sense of place describes both the natural setting and the built environment of a place. It is the special and unique characteristics that imminently identify a place as its own neighborhood and community distinct from those around it. These characteristics are critical to the long-term success of a place and, especially in the case of the study area, for the revitalization of a community. Often, an identifiable sense of place contains the following characteristics:

- Historical buildings that have evolved over time and are authentic.
- Distinct heritage of the community, often manifested in unique architecture details.
- Natural features that are celebrated such as waterways and topography.
- Multifunctioning centers with shopping, housing, civic uses, and social gathering places.
- Residents who are aware of the uniqueness of the community.
- Active event programming that tempts people to linger and explore.

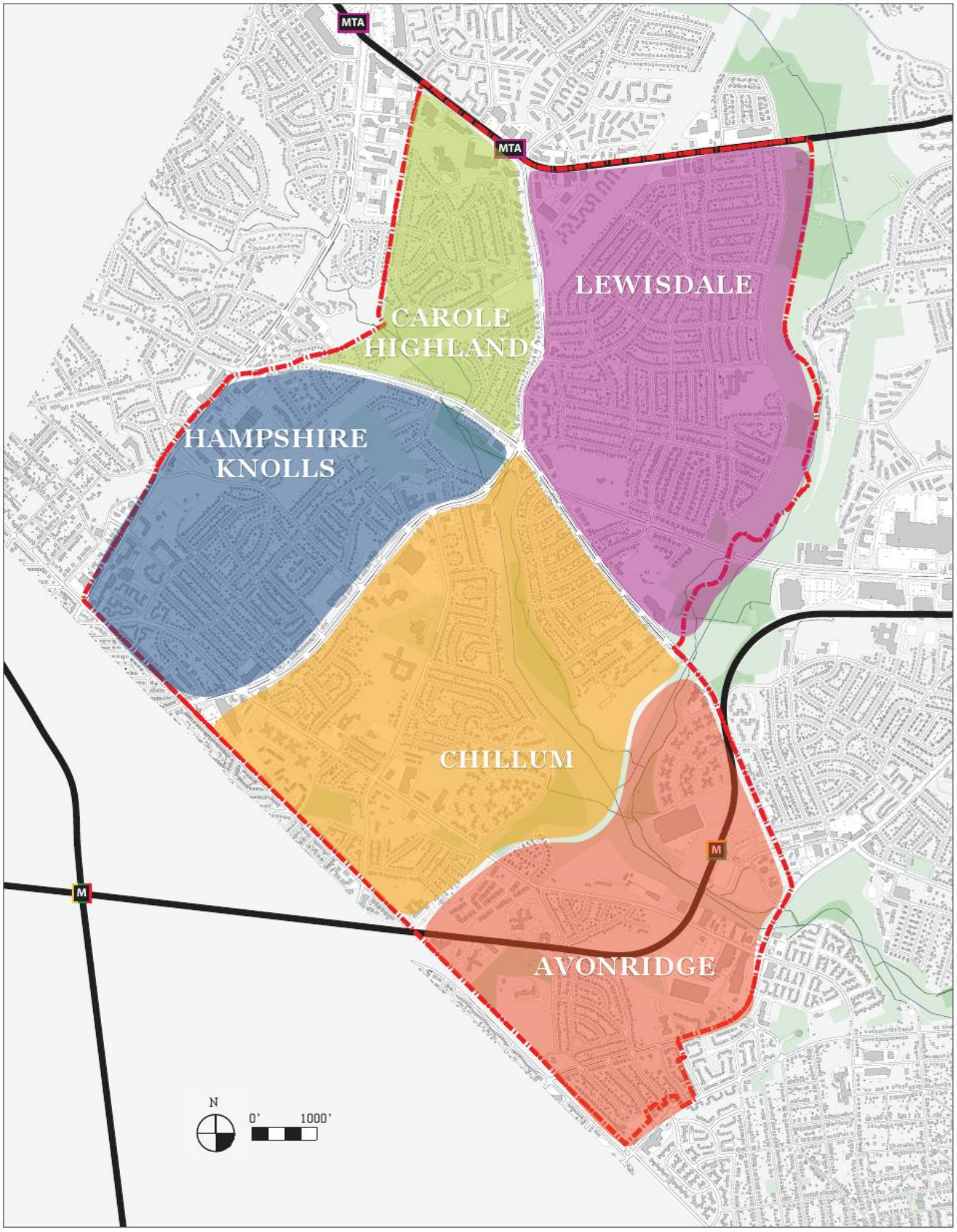
As a group of post-war suburban developments, the built environment of greater Chillum is hardly architecturally unique in the Washington, D.C., area. The architecture is reflective of the 1940s and 1950s residential style, predominantly masonry and frame Cape Cod and Colonial Revival, single-family, duplex and multifamily buildings. These neighborhoods define Chillum and are worthy of preservation and celebration, but they are not what makes the study area distinctive.

A more thorough exploration of the five neighborhoods that make up the greater Chillum community reveals an extraordinarily unique natural asset area. The immense regional trail and park system that ties these neighborhoods together and flows through the study area makes these neighborhoods distinct from other communities in the Washington, D.C., area. The Sligo Creek Park and Northwest Branch Park systems offer extensive natural areas and neighborhood parks with playgrounds, picnic shelters, and athletic fields accessible to each of the five neighborhoods in the study area. The Anacostia River Bicycle Trail System is a network of 10-foot-wide trails that connects each neighborhood to the West Hyattsville Metro Station, the National Arboretum, and downtown Washington, D.C., through many other parks and natural habitats along a stream valley. By capitalizing on this asset, an authentic true sense of place for the neighborhoods of the *Greater Chillum Community Study* can be created.

It is important to note that many other smaller elements also are important in developing the sense of place for the greater Chillum community. Location, future improvements, and existing conditions work in conjunction with the

The immense regional trail and park system that ties these neighborhoods together and flows through the study area makes these neighborhoods distinct from other communities in the Washington, D.C., area.

Map 8. Neighborhood



natural amenities and demographics in supporting a unique sense of place. Items of note include:

- Neighborhoods defined by physical boundaries.
- Location near the West Hyattsville Metro Station.
- Location of the future Purple Line light rail line along University Boulevard, including two stations.
- Regional bus connections throughout the study area for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and TheBus systems.
- Selection of a variety of housing types include single-family, duplex, condominium, and rental apartments.
- Grocery stores within a reasonable distance to most residents.
- Retail offerings interspersed and near each neighborhood.

However, in order to capitalize on these many assets, efforts must be made to minimize the liabilities that the study area currently faces. Public feedback, visual assessment, and demographic research brought many issues to the forefront that must be addressed for the greater Chillum community to fully realize its potential. These liabilities include:

- Suburban development patterns with separated commercial and residential uses.
- Major thoroughfares that prioritize automobile movements through the study area.
- Degraded condition of some single-family homes due to lack of maintenance and overcrowding.
- Poor condition of some multifamily homes that result from lack of maintenance and age.
- Lack of sidewalks and street lights in many areas.
- Lack of shelter or seating at many major bus stops.
- Condition of natural areas that is often overgrown and uninviting.
- Poor identification of neighborhoods and communities.
- Bulk trash that is scattered throughout the residential neighborhoods.

Developing a sense of place in addition to minimizing a community's current issues can be difficult in existing communities. Yet, opportunities are available in the greater Chillum community. In the following sections of this study, many recommendations are made to preserve and improve the residential architecture of the greater Chillum community. Recommendations also include improving connections among the local and regional parks, trail systems, and neighborhoods as well as supporting commercial redevelopment in key locations to develop nodes of mixed-use, urban centers. These redevelopment opportunities could help increase the sense of place in the

built environment of the greater Chillum community that tie to the historic and natural assets. New construction should build upon the legacy of the existing residential buildings through interpretations of post-war architecture, walkable site design, and the introduction of better integrated uses. This section identifies the history and sense of place characteristics that further recommendations should highlight.

By leveraging the existing assets and minimizing the safety liabilities through the implementation of the recommendations in the later sections of this study, the greater Chillum community can begin to create a stronger sense of place for itself. Implementing the many recommendations in this study will allow the community to rebrand itself and market the assets that truly make the greater Chillum community special and unique in the Washington, D.C., area.

Implementing the many recommendations in this study will allow the community to rebrand itself and market the assets that truly make the greater Chillum community special and unique in the Washington, D.C. area.

Chillum

General Description and History. Chillum is the largest and the most central community in the study area; hence, the study bears its name. Sligo Creek runs through the northeast portion of Chillum's boundaries, and several major thoroughfares also bisect the area. These physical barriers further separate homes in Chillum into four quadrants with retail along the edges and the thoroughfares. Within the barriers created by major roads and natural parkland, several communities were developed. The communities provide a variety of housing types from single-family to multifamily residential.

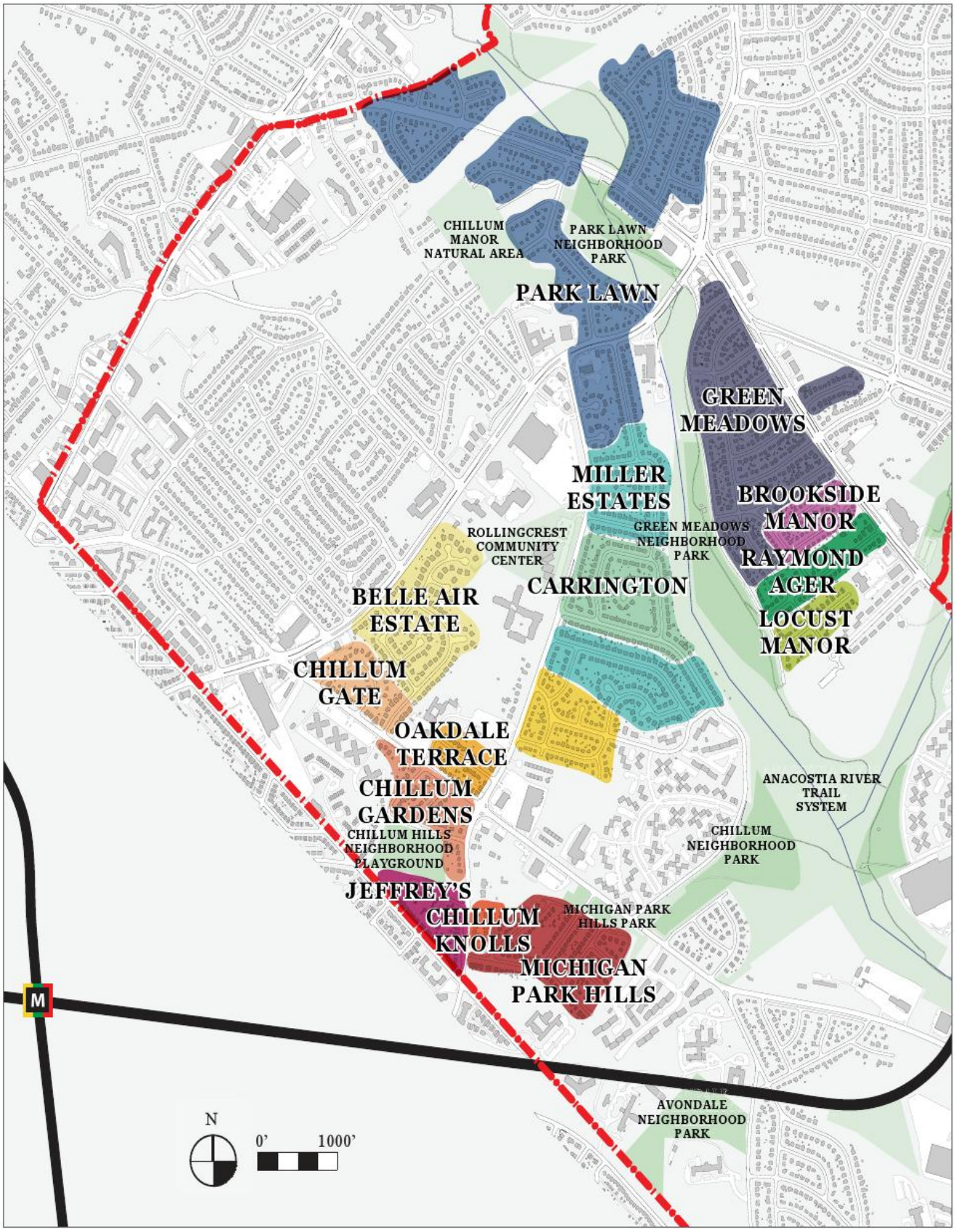
Census data indicate that the average household size in Chillum is approximately 2.65 people per home, one of the lowest in the study area. Slightly more than half of these households are families, indicating many homes are occupied by people unrelated to the homeowner or lease holder.

Green Meadows, northeast of Sligo Creek, is the oldest portion of Chillum. This development was platted and constructed between 1940 and 1942, and it is framed by Sligo Creek and Ager Road. Single-family homes sit along a gridded road pattern with long, narrow blocks. No vehicular connections were built through the natural waterway separating this neighborhood from the rest of Chillum. Brookside Manor and Raymond Ager were built in the following 10 years. Homes in these neighborhoods are predominantly masonry and frame executed in Cape Cod and simplified Colonial Revival styles. In the early 1960s, duplexes in Locust Manor and Colonial Revival garden apartments were constructed along the southeastern edge of the single-family homes. This portion of Chillum borders the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River as it joins Sligo Creek.

Lewisdale, the neighborhood to the north, is reachable across Ager Road and East West Highway. The Green Meadows Park is a community asset with a picnic shelter, restroom, and athletic fields. Retail and commercial properties are small neighborhood-serving options such as salons, bakeries, a drug store, and restaurants located near the neighborhood at the complicated intersection of Ager Road, Riggs Road, and East West Highway. No grocery store is within easy walking distance to Green Meadows and the surrounding neighborhoods. The interior streets have a small right-of-way with two travel lanes. The character at the edge of the neighborhood on Ager Road is greatly impacted by the wide public thoroughfare and access road. Most of the streets in Green Meadows do not have sidewalks. This section of Chillum qualifies for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit. Given this, the condition of the housing, the defined edges of the neighborhood, and the threat to the architectural integrity of this community, it is recommended that the area become a Neighborhood Conservation District, as discussed in the Housing Section of this study.

The area of Chillum bordering the state line of Washington, D.C., (Eastern Avenue) is the next oldest community. This quadrant is bounded by Chillum Road to the northeast, La Salle Road to the east, Riggs Road to the northwest, and Eastern Avenue bordering Washington, D.C. It includes the neighborhoods of Chillum Gardens, Jeffrey's, Chillum Knolls, and Michigan Hills Park and has a great variety of housing types and land use. Single-family homes (primarily masonry Cape Cods) were built in small suburban pockets in the 1940s. Garden apartments were built beginning in the late 1940s continuing into the 1960s. A large condominium complex, the Fairmount, was built in the 1950s near the intersection of Chillum Road and Riggs Road. A private townhouse community, Evermay Village, does not connect to the rest of the neighborhood and was built in the 1980s off Eastern Avenue. There are also commercial and nonprofit activities in this sector of Chillum. The Roman Catholic Church owns a large property where the Archdiocese of Washington runs various social service programs. A strip commercial shopping center dominates the northernmost portion of this area at the corner of Chillum, Riggs, and Eastern Avenue. A Giant supermarket is the anchor tenant. These pockets of development do not connect to one another or other commercial areas. Rather, they depend on the large connector roads for access to other developments. Most streets in this quadrant of Chillum include sidewalks on at least one side of the street.

Map 9. Chillum Communities



The portion of Chillum bounded by Riggs Road, Sargent Road, and Chillum Road has small portions of single-family homes, senior housing, and the Rollingcrest Community Center. The single-family housing makes up Chillumgate, Belle Air Estate, and Oakdale Terrace. The homes were developed predominantly during the 1940s and 1950s and are north of Chillum Road. The Belle Air Estate expanded the housing in the 1990s. The older homes are either masonry or frame Cape Cods while the newer are larger frame split-levels. The Rollingcrest Community Center and senior housing developments date from the late 1980s to the early 2000s. Some of the highest intensity commercial development within the study area is located at the intersection of Riggs Road and Sargent Road. This site is anchored by a Kmart with several pad sites. As with other neighborhoods, the separate developments are not connected to one another and depend on the major connector streets. Most neighborhood streets in this area include sidewalks on at least one side of the street.

The Cyprus Creek apartments.

The Kmart is the largest retailer in the study area. It sits behind a large parking lot and several pad sites.

The fourth and final section of Chillum is the area bordered by Sligo Creek to the east, Sargent Road to the west, and Chillum Road to the south. This development includes a mix of single and multifamily housing on curvilinear, gridded streets and a few culs-de-sac in the neighborhoods of Park Lawn, Miller Estates, Carrington, and Sargent Knolls. Most of the single-family homes were built in the 1960s in simplified masonry or frame Cape Cod styles. Newer split-level homes were built in the 1980s in Park Lawn on two culs-de-sac off Sargent Road near Riggs Road. Two large multifamily apartment complexes (Cypress Creek and the Overlook) line the eastern edge of this quadrant overlooking the Northwest Branch at 16th Avenue (Ray Road) and Chillum Road. Both are well-maintained, garden-style masonry

apartments built in the 1960s and managed by Ross Management. This area also includes two public elementary schools—Chillum Elementary and Cesar Chavez Elementary—on opposite sides of the community. A retail strip center anchored by a CVS is located at the intersection of Sargent Road and Chillum Road. The residential sections are predominantly interconnected, but residents are dependent on major connector roads for access to the commercial areas. Most of the residential streets in this development include a sidewalk on at least one side of the street.

Chillum neighborhood assets include:

- Retail choices reasonably close to each community section of the neighborhood.
- Within the connector roads, these communities have a few culs-de-sac and are interconnected.
- Each of these communities has reasonably good access to the Anacostia River Bicycle Trail System and to a neighborhood park.
- Riggs Road provides good connection to Fort Totten Metro Station for the southern sections of the neighborhood.
- Recent streetscape projects have added street trees in Park Lawn.
- Homes are in relatively good condition throughout the neighborhood.

Chillum neighborhood liabilities include:

- Median income is the second lowest in the study area and is projected to be 63 percent of Prince George's County median income by 2018, impacting a homeowner's ability to maintain aging homes.
- Apartment complexes in Chillum show a spike in crimes, such as vehicle theft and theft from vehicles, particularly along 16th Avenue.
- Retail is separated from the residential area and placed along the major roads of Chillum Road, Sargent Road, Riggs Road, and Ager Road.
- Heavy traffic and incomplete pedestrian infrastructure from the residential areas discourage residents from walking to meet daily retail needs.
- Poor connectivity between community sections due to separations by natural parkland.
- Various communities lack distinct identity due to lack of signage.
- Bulk trash items litter some streets and degrade the image of the neighborhood.

Chillum neighborhood specific recommendations (see Table 11 for more details) include:

- Create signage for each community section described to create a stronger sense of identity for residents.
- Improve connectivity between the community sections and to existing retail through improved streetscape.
- Create connections across parkland between community sections using existing public land.
- Encourage long-term conversion of commercial areas to mixed-use, transit-oriented development (TOD).

Hampshire Knolls

General Description and History. Hampshire Knolls is the neighborhood northwest of Chillum across Riggs Road. The area is bounded by New Hampshire Avenue to the northwest, East West Highway to the northeast, Riggs Road to the southeast, and Eastern Avenue to the southwest. The neighborhood is named for its three topographic high points, making its terrain the most varied in the study area. Hampshire Knolls abuts New Hampshire Avenue and the Montgomery County line. A Pepco electricity transformer station is located at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Ray Road. High-tension wires extend north from this site, and their right-of-way transects the northwest corner of the neighborhood and creates a barrier with very little connection across this easement. Hampshire Knolls has communities that include single-family homes, duplexes, multifamily rental, and condominium housing.

According to census data, the average household size in Hampshire Knolls is 3.15, the second highest in the study area and above the County average of 2.78. However, the percentage of family households is above the County average and one of the highest in the study area. This indicates that most people living in households are related to the homeowner or lease holder. This neighborhood is eligible for low-income housing tax credits.

The majority of the neighborhood is residential and consists of predominately single-family homes built between the early 1940s and the mid-1950s on former farmland. These communities include Chillum Terrace, Hampshire Knolls, Ray Park Estates, Chillum Manor, and portions of Park Lawn. These suburban-style residences are primarily red brick, Cape Cod, and Colonial Revival homes that sit along a gridded road pattern with long, narrow blocks. Only approximately 50 percent of the residential roads have sidewalks in Hampshire Knolls and Chillum Manor.

Garden-style multifamily residences and duplexes are concentrated between Eastern Avenue and Chillum Road and between New Hampshire and Riggs Road in the Hampshire Heights community. These also date from the early 1940s to the 1950s and are some of the oldest garden apartments in the study area, including Fleetwood Village and Chillum Terrace. Hampshire Heights has one of the highest percentages of poverty in the study area and much of the housing is beginning to deteriorate. This portion of Hampshire Knolls is recommended for a Neighborhood Conservation District. The current state of housing is deteriorating, but the historic architectural integrity of the multifamily residential buildings warrants conservation.

A cresting residential street in Hampshire Knolls. Bedford Towers Apartments can be seen in the distance.

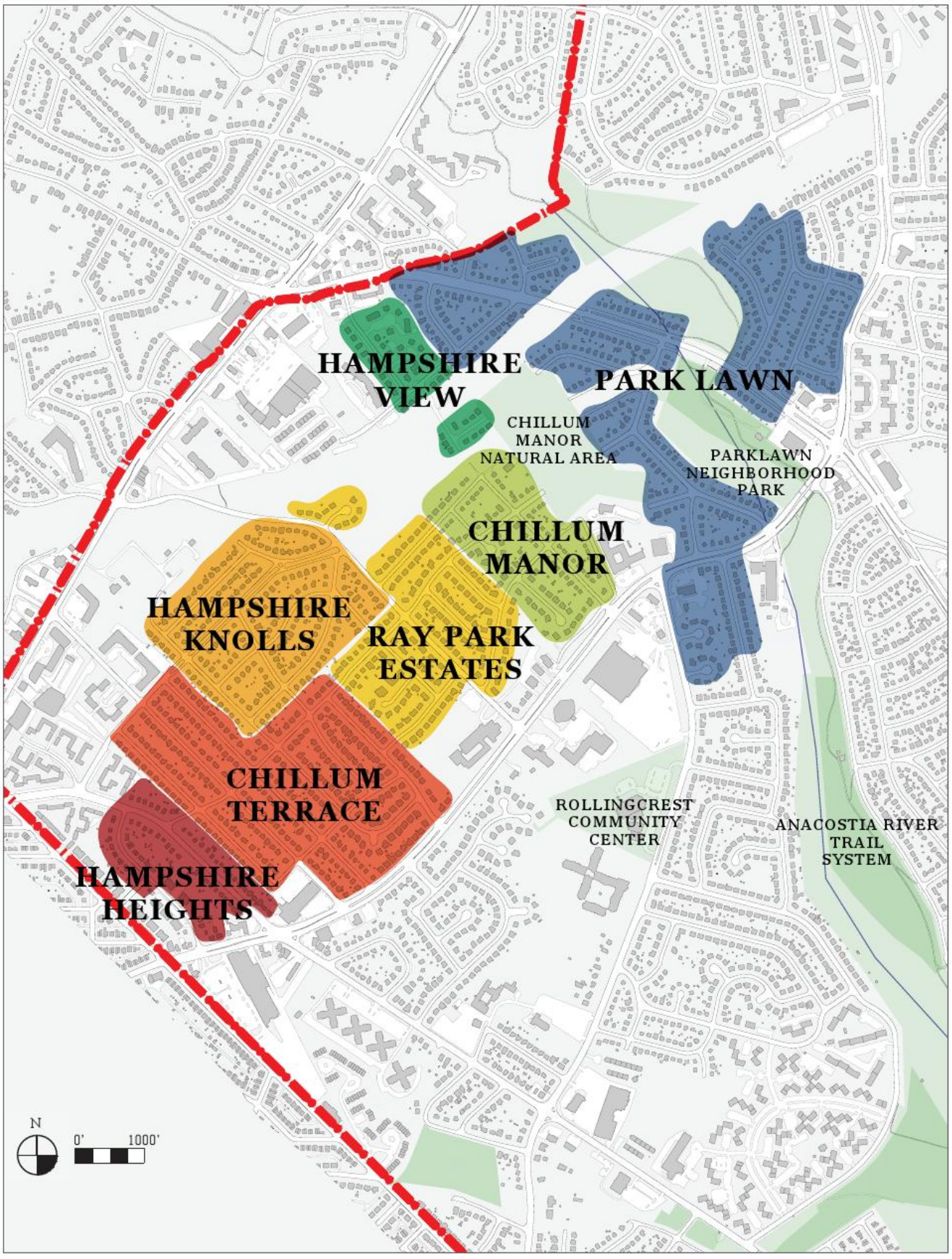
Belford Towers, a large multifamily complex comprising three 12-story towers, sits just north of the Takoma Substation along New Hampshire Avenue at the edge of the Hampshire Knolls community. The towers were built in 1970. New Hampshire Avenue is a large commercial corridor with development on both sides; retail strip centers line most of the area within Hampshire Knolls. The largest complex is just south of the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and East West Highway and is anchored by a Shoppers supermarket and a U-Haul truck depot.

Southeast of the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and East West Highway are two communities—Hampshire View and Park Lawn. Hampshire View is predominantly a cluster of small-to-large multifamily residential buildings ranging in age from the 1950s to the 1970s. The smaller, older multifamily residential buildings are in need of property improvements. A small section of single-family residences is separated by the high-tension line easement but are connected to Chillum Manor by a pedestrian bridge across the Takoma Branch. This section of Park Lawn is predominantly 1950s Cape Cod single-family homes. The residential area has a grid of streets with very good interconnectivity and access to the commercial area. The character of the neighborhood at the edge of East West Highway is greatly impacted by the wide roadway and access road.

The Pepco electricity substation along New Hampshire Avenue.

A small portion of Park Lawn is isolated between East West Highway, the Takoma Branch at Knollbrook Drive, and the open space at Chillum Manor. This single-family community includes some homes facing significant deterioration while others are in very good condition. The community is connected to the Chillum Manor section by foot paths through the natural area. This natural area has the potential to be a significant community amenity.

Map 10. Hampshire Knolls Communities



Hampshire Knolls neighborhood assets include:

- Retail choices reasonably close to each community section of the neighborhood.
- Within the connector roads, these communities have a few culs-de-sac and are interconnected.
- Riggs Road provides good connection to Fort Totten Metro Station for the southern sections of the neighborhood.
- Recent streetscape project has improved the median of the southern section of Knollbrook Drive as a stormwater demonstration project.
- Riggs Road streetscape has recently been improved, including a landscaped median.
- Takoma Branch and Chillum Manor natural areas are opportunities for unique neighborhood assets.
- Pedestrian bridge provides a beautiful connection between Chillum Manor and Hampshire View communities.
- Most homes are in good condition.

Hampshire Knolls neighborhood liabilities include:

- Median income is about average for the study area but projected to only be 67 percent of Prince George's County median income by 2018, impacting homeowner's ability to maintain aging homes.
- Hampshire Knolls crime data show spikes in crimes such as vehicle theft and theft from vehicles on Chillum Road in Hampshire Heights, particularly near multifamily rental complexes and along New Hampshire Avenue.
- Good proximity to retail is undermined because residences are separated from the commercial area that are along the major roads of New Hampshire Avenue and Riggs Road.
- Heavy traffic and incomplete pedestrian infrastructure from the residential areas discourage residents from walking to meet daily retail needs.
- Poor connectivity between community sections due to the high-tension wire easement and natural parkland.
- Edges of high-tension wire property are not well maintained, even in high visibility areas.
- Takoma Branch natural area creates a barrier between communities.
- Chillum Manor Park is not well marked, and informal trails connect portions of the neighborhood.
- Various communities lack distinct identity due to lack of signage.

- Bulk trash items litter some streets and degrade the image of the neighborhood.
- Much of the multifamily rental properties are in poor condition.

Hampshire Knolls neighborhood specific recommendations (see Table 11 for more details) include:

- Create signage for each community section described to create a stronger sense of identity for residents.
- Improve connectivity between the community sections and to existing retail through improved streetscape.
- Create connections across parkland between community sections using existing public land, particularly along the Takoma Branch and Chillum Manor Park.
- Encourage better maintenance of the edges of the right-of-way for the high-tension wires, particularly at the street edges.
- Encourage long-term conversion of commercial areas to mixed-use, TOD.

Carole Highlands

A typical street in the Carl Freeman portion of Carole Highlands.

General Description and History.

Carole Highlands is the neighborhood to the northeast of Hampshire Knolls and Chillum. As its name suggests, the topography is higher than that of the land surrounding it. This community is bounded by the County line to the west, University Boulevard to the north, Riggs Road to the east, and East West Highway to the south. The northern portion is predominantly commercial, and it was included in the Montgomery County Takoma/Langley Crossroads sector plan. However, the recommendations for this plan account for this community as a whole. This neighborhood is the most forested of the study area, not including Sligo Park. A future Purple Line station is planned on University Boulevard at the commercial district. High-tension power lines run from the Pepco transformer north through Carole Highlands. Together with Sligo Creek, these lines separate the neighborhood into two distinct sections. Like other neighborhoods in the study area, these communities were developed in the 1940s and 1950s and contain a mixture of Colonial Revival, Cape Cod, and Ranch-style homes. Carole Highlands contains single-family, duplex, and multifamily condominium homes.

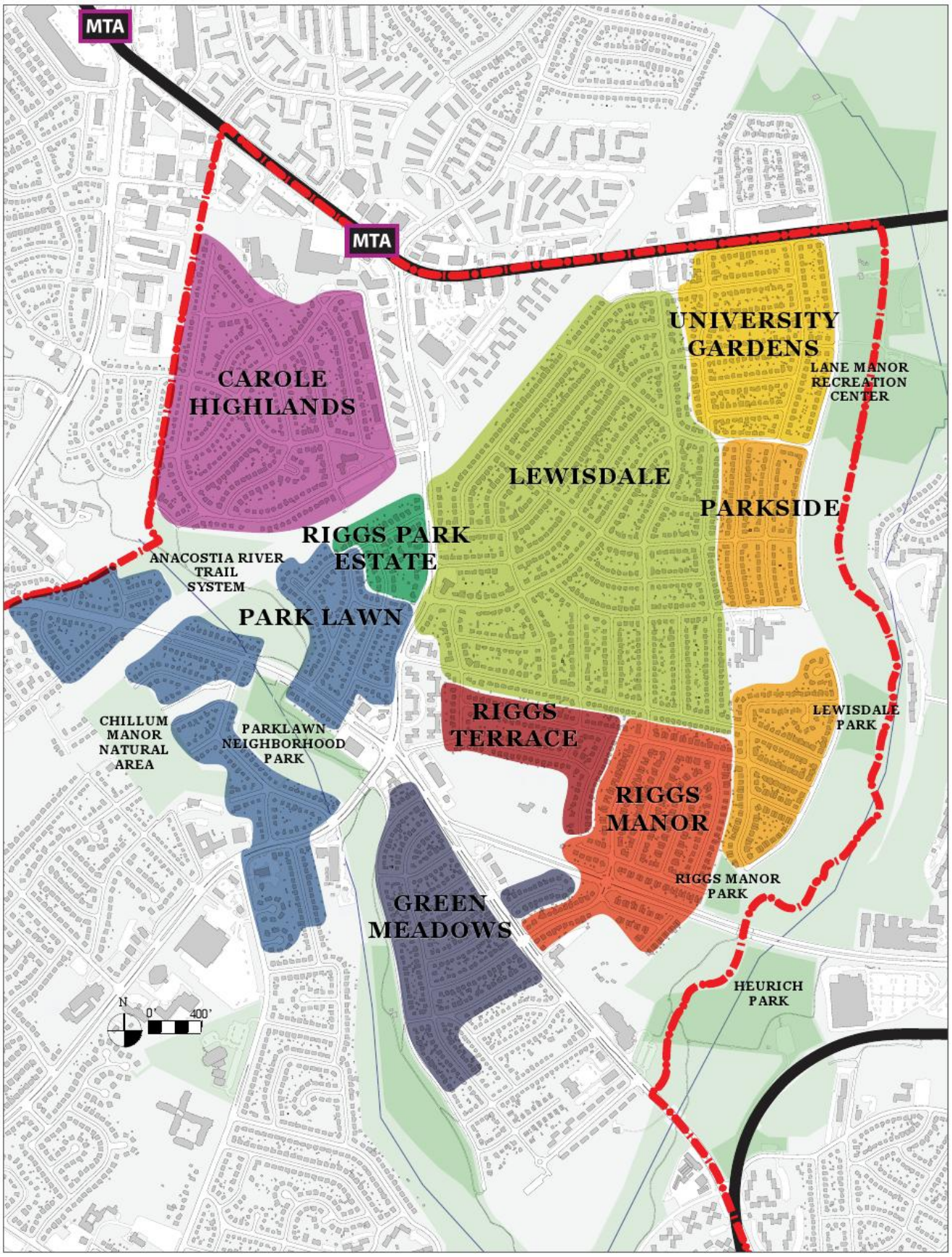
The average household size in Carole Highlands is 3.11, about average in the study area and above the County average of 2.78. However, the percentage

of family households is 69.3 percent, which is also above the County average and one of the highest in the study area. This indicates that most people living in households are related to the homeowner or lease holder.

The single-family homes between Erskine Road and Sligo Creek were developed by the Carl Freeman Companies in 1947. According to the developer, these homes were the first in the area to be developed without restrictive covenants, and the neighborhood was an integrated community from its beginning. The homes are a mixture of Colonial Revival, Cape Cod, and Ranch designs; these are the highest-style homes in the study area and are comparable to homes in Cheverly and University Park. This area is considered the most stable portion of the study area and shares a development heritage with a portion of the initial development area that is now within Montgomery County. Carole Highlands has limited, garden-style, multifamily condominium buildings along Riggs Road. These buildings reflect a slightly more modern architectural style than the surrounding single-family homes. Simple duplex homes offer a half-block transition from the multifamily to the single-family residences. The residential sections have good connectivity, but residents must reach the commercial area via large connector roads. This portion of the neighborhood also includes large, retail strip centers along University Boulevard. Most of the streets in this portion of the neighborhood do not include sidewalks.

The section of single-family homes in Carole Highlands south of the high-tension line right-of-way are made up of two communities: a portion of Park Lawn and Riggs Park Estates. These communities do not have any vehicular connections to the northern portion of Carole Highlands. These homes were built in the 1950s but are more modest than the homes north of the high tension line right-of-way. This area has limited commercial offerings with four commercial properties at the intersection of East West Highway and Riggs Road. This area has good interconnectivity, even though it is isolated by the power line easement and major connectors. The southern area of Carole Highlands has sidewalks on all streets.

Map 11. Carole Highlands and Lewisdale Communities



Carole Highlands neighborhood assets include:

- Median income is above average for the study area and is projected to be 78 percent of Prince George's County median income by 2018.
- Northern sections of neighborhood are in close proximity to abundant retail on University Boulevard.
- Within the connector roads and high-tension line easement, these streets have few culs-de-sac and are interconnected.
- Riggs Road provides a good connection to the future Purple Line light rail station on University Boulevard.
- Most homes are in good condition.

A typical street in the southern portion of Carole Highlands.

Carole Highlands neighborhood liabilities include:

- Crime data indicate a concentration of thefts from vehicles and burglary concentrated at intersections near Riggs Road.
- Good proximity to retail is undermined, because these areas are separated from residential areas and placed along the major roads of University Boulevard and Riggs Road.
- Heavy traffic and incomplete pedestrian infrastructure from the residential areas discourage residents from walking to meet daily retail needs.
- Riggs Road is a very wide road, and there is only one lit crossing between East West Highway and University Boulevard, inhibiting easy access for major northbound bus stops.
- Poor connectivity between community sections due to high-tension wire easement that separates sections.

- Edges of high-tension wire property are not well maintained, even in high visibility areas.
- Various communities lack distinct identity due to lack of signage.
- Bulk trash items litter some streets and degrade the image of the neighborhood.
- Multifamily condominiums are aging and in need of exterior upgrades.

Carole Highlands neighborhood specific recommendations (see Table 11 for more details) include:

- Create signage for each community section described to create a stronger sense of identity for residents.
- Improve connectivity between the community sections and to existing retail through improved streetscape.
- Improve pedestrian access across Riggs Road for residents in Park Lawn and Riggs Park Estates.
- Improve the edges of the high-tension wire easement, particularly in highly visible areas near major roadways.
- Create pedestrian connection across high-tension wire easement between community sections.
- Encourage long-term conversion of commercial areas to mixed-use, TOD.

Lewisdale

A typical residential street in Lewisdale.

General Description and History.

Lewisdale is the neighborhood east of Carole Highlands and is bounded by Riggs Road to the west, University Boulevard to the north, and Ager Road to the south; the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River Trail, parks, and forested area line the east of the neighborhood. This neighborhood is the largest contiguous street grid in the study area. Within this contiguous street grid are five communities. There are three neighborhood parks within the Northwest Branch area. As with the rest of the study area, this neighborhood was predominately developed between the mid-1940s and the mid-1950s with single-family and duplex homes on an internal street grid of long, narrow blocks. There are three designated historic structures in Lewisdale that deviate from the traditional post-war suburban

architecture—Green Hill, Green Hill Overseer's House, and the Rizzo House. The contiguous street grid in the majority of the neighborhood affords residents excellent connectivity and access to major streets at many locations. Between University Boulevard and Ager Road is 23rd Avenue, a major through corridor. It is a central spine with bus stops easily accessible to residents of each community within the neighborhood. Retail in Lewisdale is mainly concentrated along University Boulevard; however, a few retail buildings exist on Ager Road in addition to small strip centers along East West Highway at the intersection of Van Buren Street. The high-tension wire separates a small portion of multifamily residential and commercial activity from the majority of the residential neighborhood. Given the architectural integrity of Lewisdale, the varied condition of the housing, the clearly defined neighborhood line, and the threat to neighborhood integrity from growth related to the Purple Line, the communities in Lewisdale are recommended to become an Architectural Conservation District.

Census data indicate the average household size in Lewisdale is 4.19, the highest in the study area and much higher than the County average of 2.78. The percentage of family households is 77.7 percent, above the County average and the highest in the study area. This indicates that most people living in households are related to the homeowner or lease holder.

Lewisdale is the largest community developed and, thus, shares its name with the overall neighborhood. The community is bound by 23rd Avenue, Riggs Road, and Van Buren Street. The homes are masonry and frame Cape Cod as well as simplified Colonial Revival in style. The Rizzo House (Historic Site 65-015) is the lone designated historic site in this section. It is a yellow-brick Art Modern-style dwelling constructed between 1948 and 1952. It is protected by a preservation easement held by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). The Newbury Square apartments border the southwestern edge of Lewisdale. Built in the 1950s, they are mid-century, masonry, garden-style, multifamily rental housing. As the gateway to Lewisdale from East West Highway and Riggs Road, these apartments are in a key location to create a sense of place for the neighborhood. Currently, they are undergoing minor exterior improvements after having recently been in foreclosure. The continued improvement of Newbury Square is important to improve perceptions of the neighborhood. Approximately 75 percent of the streets in the Lewisdale community have sidewalks. The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission waterline improvements have included repairs and improvements to sidewalks on some streets.

To the south of the Lewisdale section is Riggs Terrace. Like much of the study area, these homes are Cape Cod and simple Colonial Revival style. These single-family homes surround the Green Hill Estate. Green Hill (Historic Site 65-008) was built in 1817 and is surrounded by a landscaped 14-acre

environmental setting. Green Hill was once the country house for the George Washington Riggs family, who were prominent Washingtonians in the 19th century. Since the 1960s, the home has been used as a Roman Catholic seminary. The property once included an Overseer's House (Historic Site 65-013) built in 1923, which is now a private residence. Access to the seminary is limited and the property is surrounded by a well-kept fence. Most streets in this community have sidewalks.

The southeast section of Lewisdale is Riggs Manor. This is a community of simple mid-century and ranch duplexes. East West Highway divides this community. The south portion includes four commercial properties, a church, and the Rosa L. Parks Elementary School. Most streets north of East West Highway have sidewalks. All the residential streets south of East West Highway do not have sidewalks.

The commercial strip center at East West Highway with the Newbury Square Apartments in the background.

The easternmost sections lining the park are University Gardens and Parkside. University Gardens sits at the northeast corner of the study area from University Boulevard to Fordham Street. Parkside lies between 24th Avenue and West Park Drive. University Gardens has excellent accessibility to University Boulevard retail and transit (existing and future). Lewisdale Elementary School is in the middle of Parkside. These are single-family and duplex Cape Cod and ranch-style homes throughout Parkside. The location of these sections adjacent to the Northwest Branch natural area gives residents excellent accessibility to open space and the three neighborhood parks within the natural area. The street grid between these two communities is interconnected with the other sections; however, the Lewisdale Elementary property interrupts the connection of West Park Drive. All streets in University Gardens and Parkside have sidewalks.

Lewisdale neighborhood assets include:

- Median income is the highest for the study area and is projected to be 87 percent of the Prince George's County median income by 2018.
- Northern sections of the neighborhood are in close proximity to abundant retail on University Boulevard.
- Interior streets have very few culs-de-sac and are interconnected.
- 23rd Avenue and West Park Drive provide good connections to future Purple Line light rail station on University Boulevard and to East West Highway.
- Abundant access to neighborhood parks for all residents.
- Most homes are in good condition.

Lewisdale neighborhood liabilities include:

- Crime data indicate a concentration of thefts from vehicles and burglary concentrated on University Boulevard, the intersection of Riggs Road and East West Highway, and neighborhood streets nearest these areas.
- Most residences are not within a reasonable walking distance to retail located along University Boulevard; Green Hill separates most residents from easy access to retail concentrated at Riggs Road and East West Highway.
- Pedestrian access to major southbound bus stops is difficult on Riggs Road, because it is a very wide road, and there is only one lit crossing between East West Highway and University Boulevard.
- Natural areas are not well maintained and detract from these areas being an asset for the neighborhood.
- Edges of high-tension wire property are not well maintained, even in high visibility areas along University Boulevard.
- Most communities lack distinct identity due to lack of signage; Lewisdale identity signage is small and aging.
- Bulk trash items litter some streets and degrade the image of the neighborhood.

Lewisdale neighborhood specific recommendations (see Table 11 for more details) include:

- Create signage for each community section described to create a stronger sense of identity for residents.
- Improve pedestrian access across Riggs Road.
- Provide signage to neighborhood parks on the eastern edge of the neighborhood.
- Create pedestrian connection across high-tension wire easement to give residents better access to University Boulevard.
- Encourage long-term conversion of commercial areas to mixed-use, TOD.

Avonridge

General Description and History. Avonridge is bounded by Sligo Creek and the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River to the west, Ager Road to the north, Mount Rainier and Hyattsville to the east, and Washington, D.C., (Eastern Avenue) to the south. As with Carole Highlands and Lewisdale, the neighborhood is split in two by the river valley and trail system, and a small section is separated by Chillum Road from the majority of the neighborhood.

The northeastern area includes the West Hyattsville Metro Station. The Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River's floodplain encroaches on a large portion of the neighborhood. Avonridge includes land occupied by the Metrorail line and Washington Gas. The Roman Catholic Church operates many social service programs from their land holdings in the neighborhood, which stretch from Chillum into Avonridge along to Eastern Avenue. Avonridge Park is traditionally considered the neighborhood park and sits adjacent to the church property on La Salle Road. Avonridge has the greatest retail activity in the study area; a number of suburban single-family homes can be found on the west side of the neighborhood.

A typical residential street in Avonridge.

Census data indicate that the average household size in Avonridge is approximately 2.65 people per home, the lowest in the study area. Slightly more than half of these households are families, one of the lowest in the study area, indicating many homes are occupied by people unrelated to the homeowner or lease holder. Avonridge is below the Prince George's County average in both categories. The neighborhood qualifies for low-income housing tax credits.

Avondale Grove and Avondale Terrace make up the largest section of the neighborhood. These are concentrated along La Salle Road and Chillum Road. These single-family homes were built after 1945 and are a mixture of Colonial Revival, Georgian Revival, and Cape Cod styles. These communities sit across La Salle Road from the Avondale Neighborhood Park. This community's housing is in good condition. Floodplain and natural open space separate most homes in this community from the commercial properties and the West Hyattsville Metro Station. Approximately 50 percent of the streets in this section have sidewalks.

The North Avondale neighborhood consists primarily of brick, semidetached duplexes built circa 1950 and executed in a plain contemporary style. The south section of Chillum Neighborhood Park makes the western border of North Avondale. This community is unique and the most architecturally intact in the study area, but most homes are in need of maintenance. Given these characteristics, the study recommends this section as a Neighborhood Conservation District (further explained in the Housing section of this study). La Salle Park Apartments sit just across Chillum Road from North Avondale. All streets in this community have sidewalks.

North Woodridge is a community of single-family homes that sits across Queens Chapel Road adjacent to Washington, D.C., and Mount Rainier. The homes were constructed during the 1940s and 1950s along elongated,

slightly winding blocks. Most are executed in a Colonial Revival Ranch style. Housing in this section is in good condition. Three multifamily rental developments are located across Queens Chillum Road but are not well connected to any of the single-family communities in the neighborhood. Most streets in North Woodridge have sidewalks.

The corner of Chillum Road and Queens Chapel Road has intense commercial uses anchored by a Shoppers supermarket and a U-Haul storage and fleet management facility. The parcels along Chillum Road northwest of this intersection have industrial uses. Wetlands separate the commercial and industrial area from the single-family homes to the west. Natural barriers, the elevated Metro track, and large roads prevent connectivity between these small pockets of development, despite each pocket having a street grid.

Avonridge neighborhood assets include:

- Avondale communities of Avondale Grove and Avondale Terrace are well-signed.
- Interior streets to the separate communities have no culs-de-sac and are interconnected.
- Retail is abundant.
- Abundant access to neighborhood parks for all residents.
- Most homes are in good condition.

Avonridge neighborhood liabilities include:

- Although most of the homes are in good condition, the census data indicate median income is the lowest for the study area and is projected to be 58 percent of Prince George's County median income by 2018.
- Crime data indicate a concentration of thefts from vehicles and burglary concentrated on Queens Chapel Road and Chillum Road.
- Retail is separated from most residential and placed along the major roads.
- Although Avondale Grove and Avondale Terrace are relatively close to the West Hyattsville Metro Station, natural barriers significantly increase walking distances to the station.
- Chillum Road, the main access point to the West Hyattsville Metro Station, only has sidewalks on one side of the street and is not perceived as a safe route to walk at night by many residents.
- West Hyattsville Metro Station pedestrian entrance on Chillum Road is perceived as unsafe.

- Multifamily residential complexes are aging and need property improvements and/or densification.
- Natural areas are not well maintained and detract from these areas being an asset for the neighborhood.
- Some of the various communities lack distinct identity due to lack of signage.

Avonridge neighborhood specific recommendations (see Table 11 for more details) include:

- Create signage for each community section described to create a stronger sense of identity for residents.
- Create gateway signage for Avondale Grove/Terrace and North Woodridge at Carson Circle and Eastern Avenue to be visible as vehicles and pedestrians enter the study area from Washington, D.C.
- Improve pedestrian environment on Queens Chapel and Chillum Roads with street trees, lighting, and bus shelters.
- Encourage long-term redevelopment of commercial and industrial areas to mixed-use, TOD.

Kings Park Apartments on Queens Chapel Road.

The shops at Queens Chapel Road and Chillum Road.

Map 12. Avonridge Communities

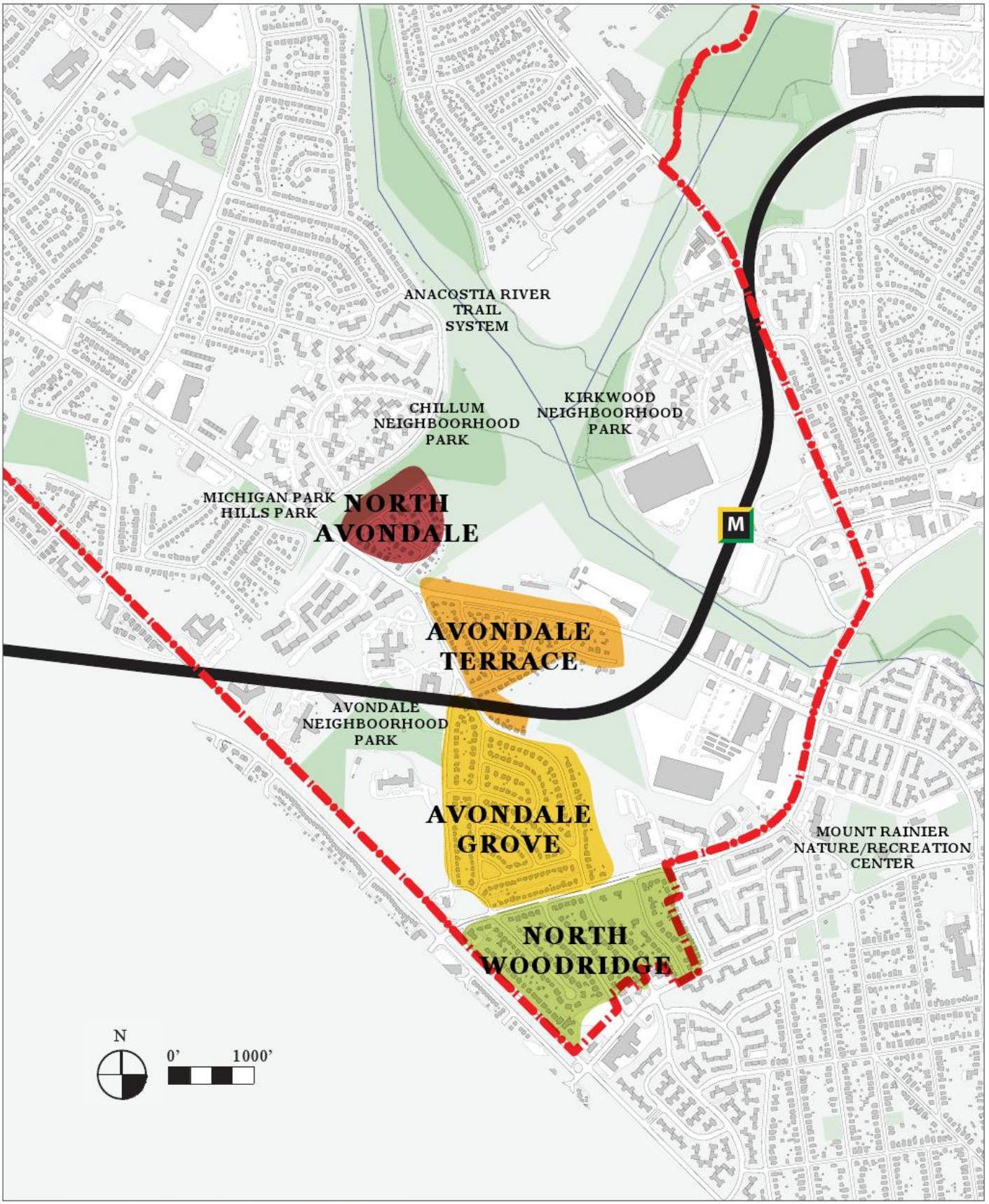


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Table 11. Sense of Place

Neighborhood	Communities	Housing Types	Commercial Areas	Visibility Improvements
Avonridge	• North Avondale • Avondale Terrace • Avondale Grove • North Woodridge	• Single-family • Duplex • Multifamily Rental • Institutional	• Queens Chapel Road and Chillum Road	• Gateway signage at the intersection of Queens Chapel and Eastern Ave • Signage for each community • Wayfinding to parks
Carole Highlands	• Carole Highlands • Park Lawn • Riggs Park Estates	• Single-family • Duplex • Multifamily Condominium	• Riggs Road and University Boulevard • Riggs Road and East West Highway	• Gateway signage at Riggs Road • Signage for each community • Wayfinding to parks
Chillum	• Chillumgate • Oakdale Terrace • Sargent Knolls • Park Lawn • Miller Estates • Carrington • Belle Air Estates • Chillum Gardens • Chillum Knolls • Michigan Hills Park • Jeffrey's • Green Meadows • Brookside Manor • Locust Manor • Raymond Ager	• Single-family • Duplex • Multifamily Rental	• Sargent Road and Chillum Road • Riggs Road and East West Highway	• Gateway signage at Riggs Road • Signage for each community • Wayfinding to parks
Hampshire Knolls	• Park Lawn • Hampshire View • Chillum Manor • Ray Park Estates • Chillum Terrace • Hampshire Knolls • Hampshire Heights	• Single-family • Duplex • Multifamily Rental and Condominium	• New Hampshire Avenue • Riggs Road and East West Highway	• Gateway signage at New Hampshire Avenue and East West Highway • Signage for each community • Wayfinding to parks
Lewisdale	• Riggs Manor • Riggs Terrace • Parkside • Lewisdale • University Gardens	• Single-family • Duplex • Multifamily Rental	• East West Highway and Riggs Road • University Boulevard	• Gateway signage at East West Highway • Signage for each community • Wayfinding to parks

	Connectivity	Parks	Neighborhood Conservation District
	• Many interior streets need added sidewalks • Improve pedestrian environment on Queens Chapel • Upgrade bus stops on Queens Chapel to provide seating • Improve lighting on Chillum Road for pedestrian safety • Explore opportunities with WMATA and M-NCPPC to create safe, attractive connection to the West Hyattsville Metro Station	• Many interior streets need added sidewalks • Improve pedestrian environment on Queens Chapel • Upgrade bus stops on Queens Chapel to provide seating • Improve lighting on Chillum Road for pedestrian safety • Explore opportunities with WMATA and M-NCPPC to create safe, attractive connection to the West Hyattsville Metro Station	North Avondale
	• Western half of Carole Highlands needs added sidewalks • Explore using existing public property to create connection between Carole Highlands and Park Lawn/Riggs Park Estates • Create pedestrian crossing on Riggs Road, Avalon Place and Crosby Road	• Small Pocket Park on 16th Avenue • Improve access to regional trail system from Drexel Street by cleaning out overgrowth to increase sense of safety	None
	• Chillumgate, Green Meadows, Brookside Manor, Locust Manor, Raymond Ager, and Chillum Gardens need sidewalks • Continue streetscape improvements from Park Lawn section into Miller Estates and Carrington • Explore connectivity options from Chillumgate to Sargent Road • Improve connectivity across Sligo Creek Park and through Rollingcrest Community Center property	• Improve access from Park Lawn, Carrington, and Miller Estates communities to and across Sligo Creek Park using existing access points • Explore opportunities with private landowners for community gardens on vacant land near Locust Manor • Improve the rear of the Rollingcrest Community Center property to engage Belle Air Estates using existing public access. • Explore urban garden opportunity at Chillum Elementary School	Green Meadows/ Brookside Manor/Raymond Ager/Locust Manor
	• Chillum Manor, Hampshire Knolls, Chillum Terrace, and Ray Park Estates need sidewalks • Improve connection through Chillum Manor open space to connect Park Lawn, Chillum Manor, and Hampshire View at Conley Road, Knollbrook Road, and Chillum Manor • Improve bus stops on East West Highway to provide seating; complete sidewalk connection on East West Highway from Fairview Avenue to Riggs Road • Implement streetscape improvement on New Hampshire Avenue; formalize connection from Belford Towers to Hampshire Knolls	• Create community park at Chillum Manor open space where trails and grass is already being cut • Upgrade informal trails between Chillum Manor and Park Lawn • Create a trail along the Takoma Branch between the orphan sections of Knollbrook Drive • Improve connection from Park Lawn to Sligo Creek Park on Chillum Manor Road. • Explore urban garden opportunity at Ridgecrest Elementary	
	• Lewisdale, Riggs Terrace, and Riggs Manor have some streets that need sidewalks • Intersection of 23rd Avenue and East West Highway should be a priority pedestrian crossing • Provide connections from Parkside across the Northwest Branch at Lewisdale Park • Complete sidewalks on East West Highway between Ager Road and Prince George's Plaza • Create improved bus stops on 23rd Avenue and East West Highway to provide seating • Create formal pedestrian connection across high-tension line ROW to connect residents to University Boulevard retail	• Improve park in Parkside at the forest edge to improve sense of safety • Add sidewalks on the park edge on West Park Drive • Complete sidewalk on Sheridan Street to improve access to Riggs Manor Park	Lewisdale/ Parkside/ University Gardens/Riggs Terrace/Riggs Manor

Housing

Background

The study area housing and neighborhood recommendations, outlined in the following text, take into consideration the input from community stakeholders, political leadership, and County government service providers. This outreach process provided the analysis for the study area's opportunities and constraints identified in Table 12.

The housing and neighborhood strategy also takes into consideration the general age of the residential housing inventory, which in most cases is over 50 years old and in some cases may be approaching 70 years old. The fact that the residential housing inventory is aging is not necessarily a concern, but with the increasing trend of single-family, detached property, converting from owner occupied to rental, and the reported increase of incidents of various code violations, there is the need to consider a range of potential intervention strategies.

Long-time residents expressed that their future goal for the Chillum neighborhoods is to preserve the charm and character that once defined the study area as a quaint suburb close to the city. These residents define their neighborhood as stable, single-family, detached homes comprised of working-class and middle-income residents who took pride in maintaining their homes and the neighborhoods. As a first-ring suburb of Washington, D.C., the early African-American residents of Chillum were moving into the community as an expression of upward mobility and as an escape from density, crime, and sometimes deteriorated housing conditions that characterized the neighborhoods that they were leaving behind in Washington, D.C. In discussing a future vision for their neighborhoods, many long-time residents expressed a strong desire to reinforce neighborhood characteristics through code enforcement and the introduction of recommendations designed to reinvest in single-family, detached homes; improve or replace higher-density, multifamily housing; improve sidewalks; revitalize viable retail districts; and use property maintenance codes to encourage compliance.

Long-time residents expressed that their future goal for the Chillum neighborhoods is to preserve the charm and character that once defined the study area as a quaint suburb close to the city.

However, this desire must be balanced with the fact that the demographics of the study area have drastically changed over the past 10 to 20 years. Several of the study area's neighborhoods are now home to lower-income households and to residents who have limited experience as homeowners, who may not desire to be homeowners or who lack the desire to assimilate the social skill sets that defined the study area prior to their moving into the community. The proposed housing and neighborhood recommendations take into consideration the findings that suggest the study area has a high potential to be negatively impacted by a decrease in ongoing housing maintenance, an increase in conversion of single-family homeownership to rental housing, and the transition from suburban to urban neighborhood characteristics.

Table 12. Summary of Challenges and Opportunities	
Opportunities	**Constraints**
• A range of housing types from single- to multifamily and owner-occupied to rental units allow for an income-diverse community. • History of stable, single-family neighborhoods. • Location of study area creates opportunity for strategic residential densification.	• Demographic shifts have created a shortage of affordable housing and caused the conversion of owner-occupied units to overcrowded rentals. • Single- and multifamily housing stock is aging, most approaching 50 years old. • Code violations and maintenance issues are affecting the market perception of the study area.

The proposed housing initiatives address the desired goals and objectives outlined in public feedback while also responding to the current economic conditions through seven essential housing approaches and strategies that can be applied at various levels in the neighborhoods within the study area.

1. Improve existing single-family housing stock.
2. Reform code enforcement to stabilize neighborhoods.
3. Increase quality affordable housing options, particularly using transit-oriented development (TOD) as a catalyst for increasing availability of mixed-use housing.
4. Research and study redevelopment and densification options.
5. Develop neighborhood-specific policies and programs for housing initiatives.
6. Implement Prince George's County's housing and economic development initiatives throughout the study area.
7. Develop relationships with national organizations with experience in transitioning neighborhoods.

Table 13. Housing Recommendations in the Study Area

Neighborhoods	Improve Existing Housing Stock	Reform Code Enforcement	Increase Affordable Housing Options	Study/ Research Redevelopment Options	Housing Policy and Program Initiatives	Economic Initiatives	National Intermediary Organizations
Avonridge		x	x	x	x		
Carole Highlands		x	x		x		x
Chillum	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Hampshire Knolls	x	x		x	x	x	
Lewisdale	x	x	x	x	x	x	x